

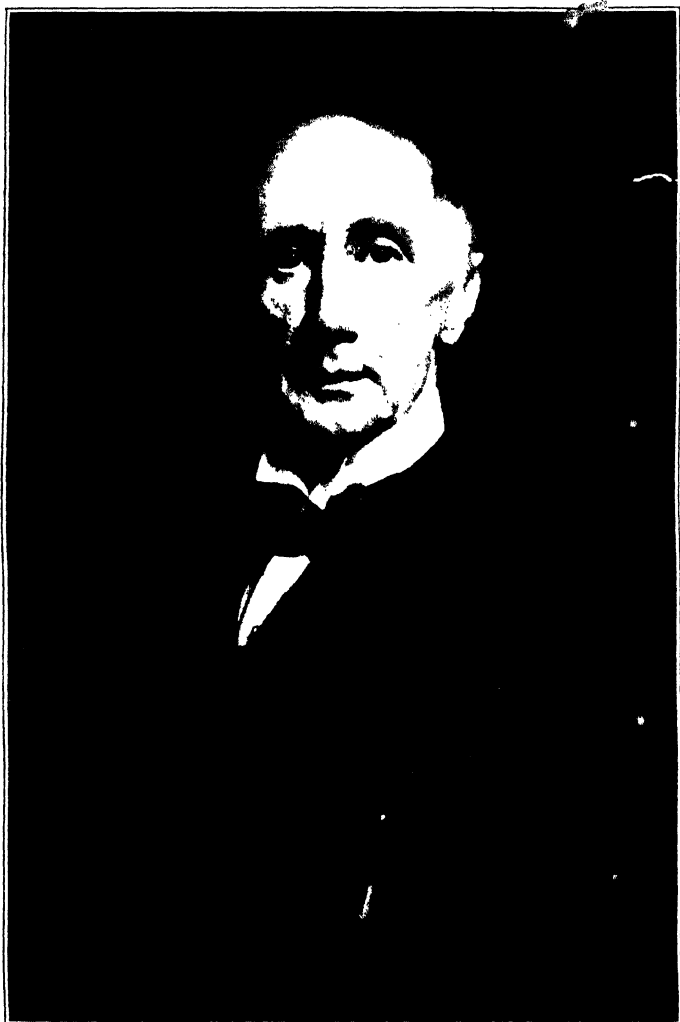


## **ECHOES OF CAUSES CÉLÈBRES**









THE COMMON SERJEANT, SIR HENRY DICKENS, K.C.

# ECHOES OF CAUSES

## CÉLÈBRES

By  
**ARTHUR LAMBTON**

FOUNDER OF THE CRIMES CLUB AND  
AUTHOR OF "MY STORY," "THE SALAD BOWL,"  
"THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER," ETC.

WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS



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TO MY FELLOW-MEMBERS  
OF  
“OUR SOCIETY”  
AFTER TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS OF  
HONORARY SECRETARYSHIP



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## FOREWORD

**A**S was the case when I wrote *Thou Shalt Do No Murder*, in publishing these sketches—many of which have already seen print—I am indebted to my fellow-members of “Our Society,” or, as it is generally called, “The Crimes Club.” So the least I can do is to dedicate the collection to them. I am specially indebted to Mr. Harry Hodge—the Edinburgh publisher—to Mr. David Whitelaw, to the late Sir Willoughby Maycock, to the late Sir John Hall, to the late Major Arthur Griffiths, to Sir Max Pemberton, and to Sir George Turner.

In the Pimlico Poisoning Case I might have mentioned that Dr. Dunkley was unable to attend the inquest owing to illness, and that Dr. Broadbent represented him. He was afterwards the famous Sir William Broadbent, whose son married the sister of an old Westminster schoolfellow of mine. Their father was the Solicitor-General for Ireland—Mr. Justice Monroe—and I used to spend my summer holidays at their place at Dalkey.

In a previous book I stated that nobody in “Our Society” was in favour of the abolition of capital punishment. Since then we have had the most appalling waste of public time and money in the farcical Royal Commission. It was utterly valueless except from one point of view. It showed Mr. Clynes—

irrespective of politics—to be one of the strongest Home Secretaries who ever held office. His dignified snub to the address forwarded to him will not easily be forgotten. Possibly he had in mind the experience of men like Lord Darling, Colonel Hales, and Sir Archibald Bodkin, K.C. Possibly he felt that the whole atmosphere of the proceedings had an unpleasant “Conscientious Objector” tone about it. But perhaps above all he was mindful of Sir Archibald Bodkin’s opinion of it in the one expressive word he used, “Piffle.”

And now I come to think of it, not only in “Our Society”—a body of men distinguished in various walks of life—do I find opinion firmly in favour of capital punishment, but I cannot recall one man out of a fairly large circle of acquaintance who wishes to see the death penalty abolished. Maybe they think of the suburban resident, and the armed burglar on a dark and foggy night, and how it would be a direct encouragement to *him*. If caught, twenty years, and then free again. If taken as a young man, there is plenty of time to recommence business. And the worst type of murderer of all. The slow poisoner? Surely his or her activities would be considerably increased.

Let anyone who wobbles over this question read the verbatim account of Kennedy’s statement, as given in this book. And let him try and picture Police-Constable Gutteridge as I have seen him after Browne’s diabolical handiwork. But as Mr. Edward Marjoribanks said at the Royal Commission, “I cannot even discuss it.”

One last word. But for my having dealt with it elsewhere, Neal's detection of George Joseph Smith in the Brides in the Bath Case would have found a place in "Great Detective Feats." And want of space limits me to this mere mention of the cases of Field and Gray, and the Bournemouth Murder.

ARTHUR LAMBTON.



**PART I**  
**CRIME IN HIGH PLACES**



I  
LORD STOURTON

I HAVE in my time met peers, good, bad and indifferent, but there are two classes of peers that I have never met. I have never known personally a peer who was a murderer, nor have I ever known a peer who resembled the one I saw depicted some years ago at the Lyceum Theatre, who, as the hero, speaking of another character in the play, informed the audience, in a burst of confidence, "that for two pins he'd tap his claret for him."

There are cynics who, aver that fortunate are those who are of no family, because the longer is the line of one's ancestors the more probable it is that one or more forbears will not bear thinking about. There are of course many exceptions to this rule, and at once the Cecil family leaps into mind. What a part they have played in English History throughout the ages ! But generally speaking, a lengthy line does not betoken an immaculate line. Yet an undesirable ancestor has probably stopped short of murder, and it is with some of those aristocrats who have broken the Sixth Commandment that I have to deal.

I am no Counsel for the Defence in their cases, but in one or two instances—notably that of Lord Ferrers—palliation may be urged through the placing of



power into the hands of a man too weak to wield it. Not all the high-born subjects of these sketches were born bad. Had they lived in modern times they would probably have never committed murder at all. To illustrate this theory I hold it to be an undoubted truism that the ideal form of government is an absolute autocracy, *provided that one finds the right man*. But the provision is such a gigantic one that the scheme on close examination becomes almost Utopian. Almost, but not quite. In our own time we have seen the government of a great country pass into the hands of one man—a great man indeed.

Now in the days when the protagonists of these sketches lived, aristocrats were born to powers practically autocratic, and this applied to our own Britain as much as to Continental countries. A servant was the chattel of a nobleman. Consequently, given a man of excessive irritability, a tyrant, and a spoilt child of fortune, it is conceivable that the continual non-restraint of violent passions can easily culminate in tragedy. That, I think, is the feasible explanation of one or two of these crimes. And with these few prefatory remarks let us proceed to concrete cases.

There are few older families in Great Britain, or for that matter in Europe, than the Stourtons. Like many other ancient British families they existed long before they were ennobled, which event took place in 1448. They have always remained of the Old Faith, as have their equally ancient kinsmen, the Throckmortons. It is of the eighth Lord Stourton that we treat. His

trial took place in Westminster Hall, and being tried there by his fellow-peers no record of the proceedings is to be found among the State Trials. An admirable, in fact the only complete, account of the case appeared in Volume VIII of the *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*. It was the work of a learned cleric—Canon Jackson.

Charles Lord Stourton, eighth of his line, was the son of William Lord Stourton. His mother was a Dudley. His father died in 1548, the widow married *en secondes nocés* a gentleman of the name of Ludlow. She died in 1560. But during the latter part of the seventh Lord Stourton's life he and his wife were separated. It was upon the death of the seventh Lord Stourton that the trouble began. For here Mistress Agnes Ryce appears upon the scene. She was the daughter of Sir Griffith Ryce, a Knight of the Garter, and her mother was Lady Katherine Howard. After the death of her husband Lady Ryce married Lord Bridgewater. To Mistress Agnes Ryce the seventh Lord Stourton left all his personal property. She has often been represented as having been married to Lord Stourton, but Canon Jackson has made exhaustive researches upon the subject and it is difficult to see how they could have been husband and wife as Lord Stourton's wife (*née* Dudley) was very much alive. And in his will she is referred to by Lord Stourton (and it is important to note that the will was made a few days prior to his decease) as Miss Ryce, or in the phraseology of the times "Mistress" Ryce. There are many fantastic stories trying to prove that Miss Ryce and Lord Stourton were married, but, as I say, Canon Jackson disproves them beyond dispute.

Now it is only according to human nature that Lord Stourton should bear a deep grudge against Miss Ryce, and, as we shall see a little later, he did not confine his animosity to her, but directed it also against all her partisans.

In 1541 the seventh Lord Stourton (William) acquired from Lord Ferrers all his Somersetshire property, and the purchase comprised Norton Ferrers, situate in the parish of Kilmington. The latter parish adjoined that of Stourton, but, whereas Kilmington is in Somersetshire, Stourton is in Wiltshire. Lord Stourton was absent for a considerable period in the suite of His Uxorious Majesty King Henry VIII in France. While he was abroad the nobleman's affairs were left in the hands of a local landowner named William Hartgill, who lived in Kilmington. From the very outset, following the demise of his father, Charles, the eighth peer, seems to have engaged upon a vendetta against the Hartgill family. First of all, he attempted to persuade William Hartgill to coerce his mother—known as Dame Elizabeth—into signing a document to the effect that she would remain a widow. But Hartgill imposed the conditions that a portion of the son's income should be set aside for her maintenance. Lord Stourton declined in no uncertain terms. As if the cause of quarrel between the two men was not sufficiently serious it was augmented by the fact that Hartgill in addition to showing himself a staunch champion of Dame Elizabeth's interests overtly proclaimed that he would make it his business to see that Agnes Ryce obtained her legacy.

At length affairs reached a crisis and on the morning

of Whit Sunday Lord Stourton appeared outside Kilmington Church at the head of a large body of armed men. But William Hartgill's son John had been apprised of the coming attack and darted out of the church, sword in hand, and, untouched by the arrows directed at him, hastened to his father's house which adjoined the churchyard. When all this took place, William Hartgill was no longer a young man, and he and his wife and most of the household sought refuge in the church tower. While the old people were ensconced there John, who was a stalwart youth, issued from the house armed with a long-bow. A female servant followed him bearing a gun and a cross-bow, and to their great credit these two beat off Lord Stourton and his retainers. John then rode off to London, interviewed the Honourable Council, and as a result the High Sheriff of Wiltshire—Sir Thomas Speake—was despatched to release the Hartgills from the Church Tower and to arrest Lord Stourton. But all this occupied two days, and meanwhile the captives had been in a parlous state. Prior to his departure for London John had supervised the hoisting of refreshments to the prisoners, but all the time he was away Lord Stourton and his followers made every effort to dislodge them. The captives were worn out when Sir Thomas Speake arrived.

After his arrest Lord Stourton was lodged in the Fleet, but only for a short time, and then his persecution of the Hartgills recommenced.

In 1553, when Edward VI was succeeded by Bloody Mary, the latter was "humbly petitioned" by the Hartgills to grant them redress for the ills that they

had suffered at the hands of Lord Stourton. Both the principals being summoned before the Council, Lord Stourton passed his word that if the Hartgills would come to his house no harm should befall them. Accordingly accepting his assurance the Hartgills repaired to Lord Stourton's residence. But the lane leading to the house was ambushed, and after old William Hartgill had passed up it six of Lord Stourton's followers fell upon John, with the result that he was left for dead. But a servant in the employ of Lord Stourton played the Good Samaritan, placed him on his horse, and he was harboured by Richard Mompesson, a forbear of the Sir Giles Mompesson who was so prominent a figure in the reign of James I, and who lived at Maiden Bradley.

For this exploit the Star Chamber sent Lord Stourton to the Fleet Prison, but he was admitted to bail on payment of £2000, and also upon undertaking to pay the Hartgills the sum in which he had been condemned.

On returning to Stourton, his lordship again intimated to the Hartgills that he was ready to make friends, and also to pay over the money according to the order. So a meeting was arranged in Kilmington Churchyard, on January 11, 1557, and the Hartgills were astonished on arriving at the rendezvous to find a retinue of sixty persons in attendance on his lordship. Becoming alarmed they sought refuge in the church, but they were persuaded to come out by some of Lord Stourton's followers, who, amazing to relate, consisted not only of servants and retainers, but of tenants, justices, and gentry."



At the approach of the Hartgills, Lord Stourton remarked, "May we would first know them to be true men." This was the secret watchword previously agreed upon. The Hartgills were promptly seized and bound.

(By kind permission of the Hon. Mrs. Stourton.)



Lord Stourton had a table placed upon the green on which he laid a cap, a case, and a purse, as though to fulfil the bond. At the approach of the Hartgills, *his lordship remarked, "Marry, he would first know them to be true men."* This was the secret watchword previously agreed upon. The Hartgills were promptly seized, bound, and conveyed to the Church House where, without food and drink, they were kept pinioned for some time.

Lord Stourton emerging from the Church House encountered the wife of John, the younger Hartgill, and proceeded to kick her, tore off her stockings with his spurs, and then struck her on the head with his sword, so seriously as to endanger her life. The two unfortunate males were then removed to a house called Bonham, near Stourton, where they were done to death in this wise: four men brought the prisoners on to a close, there clubbed them till life was nearly extinct, and then carried them to Stourton House, where their throats were slit by one William Faree, while the peer of the realm actually stood by, candle in hand, and when the deed was accomplished, chided Faree for a subsequent expression of remorse, and told him not to be squeamish, and that the Hartgills were of no more account than two sheep. A pit was then dug beneath the house, and the two bodies thrown into it.

The corpses were soon disinterred, however, and by the order of Sir Anthony Hungerford, the sheriff, a jury was empanelled at New Sarum, and a true bill for murder returned against his lordship and his four accomplices. The trial took place in Westminster



Hall, on February 26, 1557. At first Lord Stourton refused to plead, and it was only upon threat of the *peine forte et dure* that he avowed his guilt and that of his four associates.

Lord Stourton, upon being found guilty, petitioned Mary for grace on the grounds of their being both such staunch adherents to the Old Faith, but the Queen remained deaf to his appeal, and on March 2, Lord Stourton, in the custody of Sir Robert Oxenbridge, Constable of the Tower, together with the four servants, set out for Sarum, via Hounslow, Staines, and Basingstoke. On reaching his destination he was handed over to the High Sheriff, and hanged in the Market Place, the halter being made of silk, which is, and ever has been, the privilege accorded to any peer of the realm who dies on the gallows. And as a matter of fact the silken rope, for some time afterwards, was hung over Lord Stourton's tomb in the cathedral at Sarum.

But the four servants were not peers of the realm and they were hung in chains at Mere, near Bath. Except for this distinction no one can say that even in those days this was an instance of what Dickens calls in *Nicholas Nickleby*, "one law for the rich and one for the poor."

## II

### THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

---

**A**CCORDING to those who presume to be authorities on such matters, if gentlemen do prefer blondes they are running a greater risk than if brunettes caught their fancy. (Red-headed or "Venetian"-haired ladies up to the present would seem to be uncatalogued.) For much has been written by the pundits to show how untrue to life it is (especially on the stage) to make the adventuress a dark woman with the accompanying carmine lips. These same writers emphasise the fact that most of the world's wickedest women have been blondes, and they cite concrete cases. Certainly it would be hard to find—or even to equal—a greater monster than the subject of this sketch, who will for aye stand out as the most sinister figure in the lengthy reign of Le Grand Monarque—Le Roi Soleil.

Marie Madeleine Dreux d'Aubray—to give her her maiden name—was born in July, 1630. Her father was Chief Civil Magistrate of the Chatelet. The Marquise de Brinvilliers, her husband, was a dashing young captain in Louis XIV's Guard. By all accounts they were an unusually handsome couple, and yet if we may believe the same historians, de Brinvilliers

was not the ideal husband. By some he has even been called a contemptible *mari complaisant*, for it seems almost incredible that he should have been unaware that during his absences at the gaming-tables, and while indulging in affairs with other women, his wife was consoling herself with his great friend and brother-officer, Sainte-Croix, who was also a married man, and it was the death of the latter on July 31, 1672, that was instrumental in revealing the true character of the Marquise de Brinvilliers. For when he died, Sainte-Croix left behind him a small strong-box which was claimed by his widow. But when Sainte-Croix's will was read it contained a clause that was most insistent to the effect that the said strong-box was to be handed over, unopened, to the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

Curiously enough, the key was in the lock, and, knowing what we do of human nature, the very character of the clause would tempt some inquisitive and not too honourable individual to "just have a peep." In this instance it was opened in the presence of a magistrate, or, as he was termed in those days, the "lieutenant-civil." It contained a promissory note for 10,000 livres to a certain M. Cusson, on account of a certain M. Paul; the other was an acknowledgment of a sum of 30,000 livres, owing to Sainte-Croix and signed by the Marquise's father (d'Aubray). The first paper was signed by the name of Pennautier and it was stated therein that Paul and Pennautier were one and the same person. I will refer to this a little later.

The other articles in the strong-box, i.e. those beneath the two papers, resembled the contents of a

dispensary. Some of the latter were administered to a variety of animals, all with fatal results, but post-mortems failed to discover the faintest trace of poison. Yet that the animals did die of poison was obvious. What was the dread secret of these phials of colourless liquid and the packets of whitish powder. Naturally suspicion fell upon Pennautier and the Marquise. The former was a very rich doctor and Receiver-General for the French clergy ; this office alone brought in an emolument of £10,000 a year. It was recalled that many who had stood in his path had suddenly solved the Great Mystery. Also that he and Sainte-Croix were intimate friends, and hailed from the same part of France.

As regards the Marquise, she was in a worse plight than Pennautier, for in those days money talked even more than it would to-day, if anybody had any, and, as has been stated, Pennautier was a very rich man. De Grammont, in his *Memoirs*, says that "he was too rich to be convicted," and in one of Madame de Sevigné's famous letters occurs this phrase, "Everyone—a whole world is working to save Pennautier. He has only to fear the indiscretions of La Brinvilliers."

But, although they were much more than "indiscretions," but open accusations, De Grammont and Madame de Sevigné proved right, and Pennautier was acquitted.

Let us hark back a little. During the lifetime of Sainte-Croix, d'Aubray, scandalised by the open intimacy of his daughter and her lover, obtained from Louis XIV a *lettre de cachet* against Sainte-Croix. Now,

in the Bastille, Sainte-Croix's cell was shared by an Italian named Exili, an alchemist. This Exili, like another famous alchemist—to wit, Cosmo Ruggieri—had been in the employ of the Medici. There is no doubt that as a toxicologist he was in the foremost rank and that at that time he was among the very few who was aware of the deadly properties of arsenic.

If I may here digress for a moment, I can recall, even in my own time, that in the Lamson case the doctor employed aconitine as the fell agent, and Sir George Turner has always told me that even as late as that (1882) it was not generally recognised as a deadly poison.

To Sainte-Croix, Exili imparted his deadly secret. And when Sainte-Croix was released from the Bastille he procured Exili's liberation shortly afterwards. The cheerful couple now developed into a quartette, La Brinvilliers being the third, and a chemist named Glaser the fourth. It is stated that while they were both in the Bastille Exili proved that he was not talking idly to Sainte-Croix, as he managed to procure the deadly powder, made up by Glaser from his prescription, the formula being smuggled out of, and the arsenic being smuggled into, the Bastille, through La Brinvilliers. Then the poison was tried, not on the proverbial dog, but on an unfortunate gaoler, with results that Sainte-Croix found absolutely convincing.

In the summer of 1666, d'Aubray was persuaded by his daughter to repair to his country seat at Offemont, near Compiègne. Shortly afterwards, to be

exact on September 10, he expired in great agony, having been seized with a sudden mysterious malady that induced horrible convulsions.

I remember once narrating to the late Mr. George R. Sims how in a melodrama the adventuress is asked by the villain to poison a boy who stands in the way of succession to an estate. The adventuress only occupied some two seconds before replying, "Yes, I will poison him." And, after laughing, Sims said, "They cannot *construct*, that's the secret of the whole thing. That's why so many plays are so rotten."

But in the case of Brinvilliers and her father, the dreadful parricide does not seem to have hesitated over the deed much longer than the melodramatic adventuress. Sainte-Croix was burning over the *lettre de cachet*, and, by playing upon the cupidity of La Brinvilliers, he pointed out that, her father out of the way, they would no longer be short of money. But there he was mistaken. Very little was left to the Marquise. Most of it went to her two brothers and to one sister.

Shortly afterwards the elder brother was dining at the family mansion in Paris when a newly-engaged valet named La Chaussée waited upon him. On putting his glass to his mouth, d'Aubray found that the contents burned like vitriol. Others at the table bore this out, and La Chaussée hurriedly removed the glass.

In the spring of 1667 at a dinner-party given at the same brother's country seat at Villequay in Beauce, everyone was taken violently ill after eating a *vol-au-vent* served to them by La Chaussée. All the guests, however, recovered. Only the host never seemed the

same again. In fact, his condition proclaimed extreme debility and from being a healthy man he developed into a chronic invalid. On June 17, 1760, he died. The doctors, who had known about the *vol-au-vent*, held an autopsy, but as I have said, the properties of arsenic, being then unknown, nothing came of it.

But in the following November the second brother died, the symptoms being identical. Upon this, the widow of the eldest brother became alarmed on her own account and literally barricaded herself in her country seat. Very shortly afterwards she interviewed an applicant to her for the post of under-gardener. Intuitively, she mistrusted the man and did not engage him. Maybe she was right. For the would-be gardener was none other than La Chaussée, the creature of Sainte-Croix and Brinvilliers.

But when in 1672 Sainte-Croix died and the famous strong-box was opened, La Chaussée found himself upon his beam ends and then events moved quickly. When arrested, he was perambulating the streets of Paris, his pockets containing little or no money, but a white powder, which he said was used for sharpening razors. It proved to be of the same species as that in the strong-box.

When put to the torture he displayed extraordinary fortitude. The rack, stretched as though his limbs must part asunder, did not elicit a groan. But it was when out of the tormentors' clutches that he gave tongue. He admitted poisoning the brothers d'Aubray at Sainte-Croix's instigation, who told him that La Brinvilliers was ignorant of the crime. This La

Chausée knew was untrue, as once, when he took a message to her from Sainte-Croix, she extracted from him a promise that he would leave France.

La Chausée was shortly afterwards sentenced to be broken upon the wheel and La Brinvilliers to be decapitated—if they could find her. But she had taken refuge in a convent at Liège. All this time we are told very little about her husband. He appears to have gone his own way and to have allowed his wife to go hers. But now, with a price upon her head, he seems to have communicated with her in the convent and to have commiserated with her. He even offered to assist her financially if he could—but he was utterly *décavé*, and as a fact the Marquise was entirely dependent upon a small allowance made to her by her sister.

However much La Brinvilliers may have broken the Law, the police, in her case, were equal in wrongdoing to the law-breaker. For they numbered among the *chevaliers de guet*, as the Parisian police agents were dubbed, one François Degrais, a man of parts and most prepossessing exterior. Quite nefariously he was to be the bait to ensnare the Marquise. Disguised as a priest, he easily gained access to the convent. The rest was child's play. One day the novice and the priest drove into the country, the priest suggesting breakfast at a village estaminet. The artful agent had so arranged that at a certain point the carriage should be surrounded by his men.

After her arrest, amazing documents were discovered by Degrais. It will never be known the number of victims La Brinvilliers sent to their doom. One must of course allow for exaggerations and



discount much that lacks absolute proof. She has been accused of visiting patients in a hospital in the guise of a nurse and then administering to them fruit and "cooling" drinks, into which arsenic had been introduced. In each case the administration proved fatal. It is stated in her dying confession that she may have poisoned more than twenty people, but at least that number.

The sentence upon her ran "that she was to make the amende honourable before the principal gate of the church of Paris, to which she should be carried on a cart, barefooted, with a rope round her neck, carrying a lighted torch, two pounds in weight, and there on her knees say and declare that she had poisoned her father and her two brothers wickedly, for vengeance and the desire to possess their goods." Then she was to be taken to the Place de la Grève, her head cut off, her body burnt, and the ashes scattered to the winds. But first of all it was decreed that she was to be subjected to the question both ordinary and extraordinary.

There is no case in which accounts are so directly opposed as those of the description of how the Marquise de Brinvilliers underwent "the ordeal by water." Some say that at sight of the buckets and the preparations she confessed everything. Others that she bore the agony unflinchingly, chaffing the executioner when she saw the buckets,—"*Cher Maître, vous me donnez une soif insatiable.*" And, to quote Madame de Sevigné again, she writes, "She died as she had lived—resolutely, merely stipulating that, as she walked to the scaffold, the executioners should

ward off the contaminating presence of Degrais" (and here, it must be admitted, all will sympathise with her).

In one of his short stories, Conan Doyle relates how a certain man received a present of a pipe from an acquaintance of his. He was at a loss to understand it. For, as far as he could recollect, the donor had never in his life before been known to have given anything to anybody. However, in due course the recipient filled the pipe and lit it, having first examined it. It was a curious pipe. Not only was the bowl a large one, but the stem was very thick, made of leather and indented. As he commenced smoking a curious sensation came over him. He seemed to pass into a sort of trance in which all the question by water was enacted, by the Marquise de Brinvilliers. The stem of the pipe had once been the stem of the funnel into which the water had been poured. The indentations had been caused by Madame's teeth in order to suppress her agony. That was the first and only time the recipient smoked the pipe, and it was returned to the sender next day with thanks.

Viewing the punishment dispassionately, the Marquise may consider herself lucky to have escaped with decapitation. For in our own country, as late as 1726, Catherine Hayes was burnt at the stake for murdering her husband. It is true that she should have been strangled first, but the executioner relinquished the cord too soon. But strangulation and then consumption of the body by flames is not nearly so happy a despatch as decapitation, and the latter was in France the prescribed form of punishment for husband-

murder or *petit-treason*. Parricide is an even more unnatural crime.

As regards the water inconvenience, *quot homines tot sententiae*. For only the other day I read of a gentleman who backed himself to drink off 150 tumblers of water. Somebody took him and had to pay up. The winner's name is Hadji Ali. He is said to possess two stomachs, both above normal size. What a pity that, like the Japanese, the Marquise could not have appointed him her substitute for a consideration! But meanwhile Hadji Ali is always open to repeat the feat if the bet is sufficiently high. He is an Egyptian gentleman.

### III COUNT KÖNIGSMARK

THE greatest living authority upon Westminster Abbey—Mr. Lawrence Tanner, history master at Westminster—is probably repeatedly asked what are his views as regards the various monuments contained therein. That is to say, how many should be scrapped and how many retained—very much upon the lines of our public statues. I have frequently heard it said that the monument in the Abbey depicting the assassination of Mr. Thomas Thynn in his coach might well be removed. I am not of that opinion. It is, I admit, some time since I saw it, but for the major part of five years of my life I passed it every morning, and recall that it was adjacent to the tomb of Dr. South, the eminent preacher—Busby's famous pupil (albeit even he was frequently flogged by him).

When Samuel Warren wrote *Ten Thousand a Year*, that was considered an enormous fortune, and we recall that Becky Sharp said of Sir Pitt Crawley that "it was very easy to be good on five thousand a year—in the country."<sup>1</sup> Well, still earlier, incomes of these dimensions counted for far more, and Mr. Thomas

<sup>1</sup> Nearly always misquoted "on ten thousand a year." (A. L.)

Thynn,<sup>1</sup> of Longleat in Bath, an ancestor of the present Lord Bath, was possessed of ten thousand a year, and not only was he accounted the richest commoner of his day, but he went by the sobriquet of "Tom of Ten Thousand." Thomas Thynn was distinctly a man of parts, and had performed upon the stage of English History. The erstwhile crony of James II became the great friend of Monmouth. Prior to that, while in his fourth successive Parliament as the representative of Wiltshire, he had been recommended by the Merry Monarch to "mind his own business and cease trying to stir up strife." This was the outcome of Thynn's petition to Charles II to end the prorogation of what is always called The Long Parliament (1679).

And we behold Thynn entertaining royalty at Longleat, and we might almost add royalty, for among his guests was Monmouth. There too came Dryden (one seems unable to get away from Westminster) and according to a very authoritative account the poet introduced his host into *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Each house receives him as a guardian god,  
And consecrates the place of his abode,  
But hospitable treats did most commend,  
Wise Issachar, his wealthy Western friend.

"Wise Issachar" being intended for Thynn.

Now when the old Lord Northumberland died, he left behind him a daughter who through the instrumentality of her guardians was married to Lord Ogle. But he died a year later, and the widow, being

<sup>1</sup> I have throughout retained the old form. (A. L.)

still a mere child, there was of course no issue of the union. So her match-making old mother found a second husband for her, this time in the person of Thomas Thynn. It was at this epoch that this country was honoured by the visit of two gentlemen from the Continent—two brothers. Philip Christopher von Königsmark and his younger brother, Charles John. And this visit took place at a time specially favourable to adventurers and place-hunters. Thynn's marriage was an amazing one. Even although he was her second husband, the bride was then only fifteen, and immediately after the ceremony she fled to Holland. From Holland she is said to have gone to Hanover, where at the Court she met the elder Königsmark.

The Königsmarks were of German extraction, originally a branch of the Brandenburgs, but for some time they had been naturalised Swedes. Our two brothers were at home in all the capitals in Europe, and *au fait* with all the movements of their respective Courts and Society. Some authorities state that Charles John Königsmark never met Mrs. Thynn on the Continent at all, but in London. Be that as it may, he determined that she should be his, for what was to prevent it? Merely the trifling obstacle of her husband, Mr. Thomas Thynn. Very primitive and rough and ready methods sufficed for the purpose. Three bravi were hired, of varying nationalities.

Six weeks after the arrival of the Königsmarks in London the removal of Mr. Thomas Thynn took place. (The exact date was February 12, 1682.) He had been upon a visit to the Duke of Monmouth in Pall Mall. Scarcely had he seated himself in his

coach than a blunderbuss was pointed at him through the open window and he was shot at sight.

A tremendous hue and cry was raised and the three assassins were quickly run to earth. And upon this a reward of £200 was offered for the apprehension of Count Königsmark. Accordingly, thanks to the efforts of the authorities, Königsmark was arrested just as he was about to board a steamer at Gravesend that was due to sail for Sweden. His enquiries practically admitted his guilt, for he named the three bravi, and asked if anybody had confessed, and when told that all was known he acted in a very distraught manner and among other whimsicalities "started biting his clothes."

Treated with every courtesy, Königsmark was brought to London and taken before Charles II at Whitehall, but nothing would persuade him to admit that he had been a party to the assassination, and at the subsequent trial the Lord Chief Justice (Pemberton) dwelt upon the fact that the point to be considered was whether he had commanded or authorised the murder to be done. Unless it could be proved that he had, then he could not be an accessory before the fact, or in the quaint phraseology of those times, "an accessory in the case."

This sentiment of the Lord Chief Justice evidently decided the jury, for Königsmark was acquitted. The three bravi, whose names were Vratz, Lieutenant Stern, and Borosky, were duly executed.

I always draw an analogy between the case of Königsmark and King Henry II of England and Thomas á Becket. "Will nobody rid me of that

turbulent priest ? ” How far did King Henry “ command ” the assassination of the prelate ?

And as regards the execution of the three bravi and the acquittal of the Count, one is reminded of a certain story, of which part runs as follows :

“ The King laughed heartily and freely forgave him, but the slave he ordered to be kept soaked in palm-oil until the first dark night.”

Gentle insinuations were conveyed to Königsmark junior after the Thynn affair that the English climate was a very treacherous one, and so he wisely returned to the Continent where, after certain vicissitudes, he met a soldier's death, as he fell before Argos. (Nobody has ever denied the personal courage of the Königsmarks. Aristocrats they ever were.)

The younger brother having now passed beyond, we will deal with Philip Christopher. He returned from England to Germany and to the Court of Hanover, and during his sojourn there he was appointed a colonel of dragoons. And on this note I must digress for a moment. Once on a visit to this country the Kaiser made a speech at a banquet, and he spoke as follows :

“ It may interest you all to know that this day I have appointed my grandmother a colonel of dragoons, it is not given to every man to appoint his grandmother a colonel of dragoons.”

The Kaiser might have recalled the action of his royal forbear and Count Königsmark.

But now we hark back to tragedy. Königsmark



had in former days carried on a mild flirtation with the Princess Sophia, the daughter-in-law of Ernest Augustus and the unhappy wife of the man whom we afterwards invited to be our king, although he could not speak a word of English. The unhappy young Princess was married to a man utterly unsuited to her, both in tastes and temperament. Königsmark was a man of fine presence and superior in every way to George Louis, except as regards income, and here there was a wide distinction.

The mild flirtation of formerly between Königsmark and the Princess Sophia now became a serious affair. To what lengths it went must be a matter of speculation. Allowance must be made for the machinations and innuendos of the Countess von Platen—the mortal enemy of the Princess Sophia, and of Königsmark, and perhaps the worst woman who ever lived—which may sound rather a tall order.

She was one of twin sisters—the daughters of the penniless Count Karl Philip von Meisenburg. Arrived at the age of puberty, the two sisters set themselves to acquiring money, and for that object the medium is “man.” One became the mistress of the father, the other of the son, that is to say, of Ernest Augustus, and of George Louis. To preserve appearances, the elder sister was married to one of the young Prince’s tutors, named Platen, and the younger to another named Busche. In return the tutors became “Counts” and “Von.” The Countess von Platen was munificently provided for, and with a scheming nature like hers it is not difficult to comprehend why she hated the Princess Sophia. Therefore

when Königsmark turned up again her way lay clear. It must be admitted that the Princess had openly twitted the Countess von Platen with her position. Worse still, but this latter is unproved, Königsmark is said to have boasted when in wine that he had obtained Princess Sophia's favours. All this was sedulously reported by von Platen's agents to Ernest Augustus.

One night at a ball in the Castle of Herrnhausen, von Platen upon some pretext inveigled Königsmark into an arbour. Shortly afterwards an emissary of von Platen's was sent into the same arbour after von Platen and Königsmark had left it, and knowing George Louis to be there she said that she had come for one of the Princess Sophia's gloves that she had left there. George Louis thereupon assumed that he had proof of his wife's infidelity and from that moment had nothing more to do with her—which was exactly what von Platen was aiming at. Thereafter the unhappy Princess became virtually imprisoned in the castle and von Platen could insult her with impunity. The weight of historical evidence is on the side of a guilty intrigue between the Princess Sophia and Königsmark. This must be conceded. Love letters that passed between them are scarcely of a platonic nature, and these have been read by other eyes than those of the lovers. All this of course played into von Platen's hands.

One day Königsmark received a letter—afterwards proved to have been forged by von Platen—giving him an assignation in the Princess's apartments. All directions were carefully enjoined upon him and he

eventually reached his goal. Meanwhile von Platen sent a special messenger to Ernest Augustus, who was at the Opera, informing him that his daughter-in-law was closeted with Königsmark in the royal apartments. It is said that Ernest Augustus was more interested in the Opera, but owing to von Platen's importunities he consented to send four men of his bodyguard to place Königsmark under arrest when he quitted the palace. Upon this von Platen summoned the four men to her presence, and told them that they were to arrest a dangerous criminal and that if he offered resistance they were not to hesitate to take extreme measures. They were then liberally plied with drink, and a considerable sum of gold found its way into their pockets.

It was after midnight when Königsmark left the Princess. As he passed through a hall the bravi, who had been concealed behind a huge stove, leapt upon Königsmark and tried to pin him to the ground. But the Count was lithe and wiry and managed to free himself and draw his sword. He fought as well as Monsieur Beaucaire. He accounted for two of the assassins, but a third felled him with an axe, and as he lay on the ground the fourth thrust a spear through his side. As he uttered the chivalrous words, "Don't harm the Princess," the fiendish von Platen appeared and gloated over him. Yet so terrible were the maledictions that the dying man poured out upon her that it is on record that she stamped her heel on his mouth in order to stifle them.

It has always been a mystery what became of Königsmark's body. Ernest Augustus had never

dreamt of this *dénouement*, and one wonders what was the fate of the remaining two men of the bodyguard. Some say that Königsmark was buried beneath the Princess's bedroom. Others, in a secret chamber which opened by pressing a button concealed by a mantelpiece—the whole fireplace revolving and disclosing the *oubliette*.

Meanwhile the unhappy Princess was virtually kept a prisoner for twenty-eight years, the Uncrowned Queen of His Majesty King George I of England. But there is something in superstition after all. A soothsayer had told him that when his wife died he would follow her shortly afterwards. When his wife's twenty-eight years of suffering had ended and he was told of it he hastened abroad, but was immediately seized with an apoplectic fit, from which he never recovered. And so he rejoined the wife who, instead of being Queen of England, was shut up for most of the year in the Castle of Ahlden, known only as the Princess of Ahlden.

It is not a little singular that we have one brother hiring bravi to assassinate Thomas Thynn, and the other being assassinated by a second set of bravi in the pay of another employer—in only sex is there a marked dissimilarity in the two crimes.

But if we admit that in fiction "Miladi" in *The Three Musketeers* was the worst female character ever created, then I think we must grant that in real life the Countess von Platen was the equal of the elder Dumas' great creation—Lady Winter.

#### IV

### THE ELEVENTH LORD LOVAT

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**T**HIS breezy, hoary-headed old sinner was born in 1667 and entered upon a military career in 1692 with a captaincy in the regiment raised and commanded by Lord Tullibardine, and it is not a little singular that a modern-day descendant of the subject of this sketch should have been the founder of Lovat's Scouts. A marked exception, if one were needed, that heredity does not always go to the making or the marring of those who come afterwards. I have just been reading a statement by Mr. Eden Philpotts to the effect that it is utter rubbish to talk of the "criminal classes" as though they were a class by themselves. He says that the *mens rea* is to be found in all ranks of society and that a prison governor once told him that education had nothing to do with the criminal mind, and therefore with those under his charge. That, on the principle of "opportunity makes the thief," lawyers as a body had disgraced their profession more than the members of any other calling. It is not for me to affirm or deny the truth of this, because a prison governor must know who is in his charge, but I am still convinced that what I once wrote holds good, and that is that the medical profession contains the fewest numbers



SIMON FORD LOVAT  
After Hogarth.



of Black Sheep. It must be granted, however, that the prison governor rightly names theft as the commonest form of crime and therefore the lawyer has a greater opportunity to commit this particular felony than the doctor.

: Simon Fraser, as he then was, did not remain long in Lord Tullibardine's regiment, but sent in his papers in order to devote time to establishing his claim to the headship of the Frasers. The chief obstacle in his way was a woman, heiress and next-of-kin to the existing Lord Lovat, and who was betrothed to the son of Lord Saltoun. By dint of distribution of coin of the realm, Fraser gathered together a crew who, as the saying is, "would stick at nothing." These beauties ambuscaded both Lord Saltoun and the would-be bridegroom, and, conducting both prisoners beneath a gibbet, gave them their choice of either swinging from the beam or for ever abjuring the society of Miss Fraser. The captives decided to live on. Attempted abduction of the heiress was the next act, but it failed. He then committed an offence which must be rare. Failing to kidnap the daughter, he gained possession of the mother, the Dowager Lady Lovat, and although he was of the Reformed Faith, he married her by force, according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, the officiant being duly qualified a priest. But, the minions of the law being hot on his heels, he managed to defeat them in an encounter, and he got away to the other side of the Channel. There the Pretender bestowed a commission upon him for embracing his cause, and the faith of the Church of Rome.

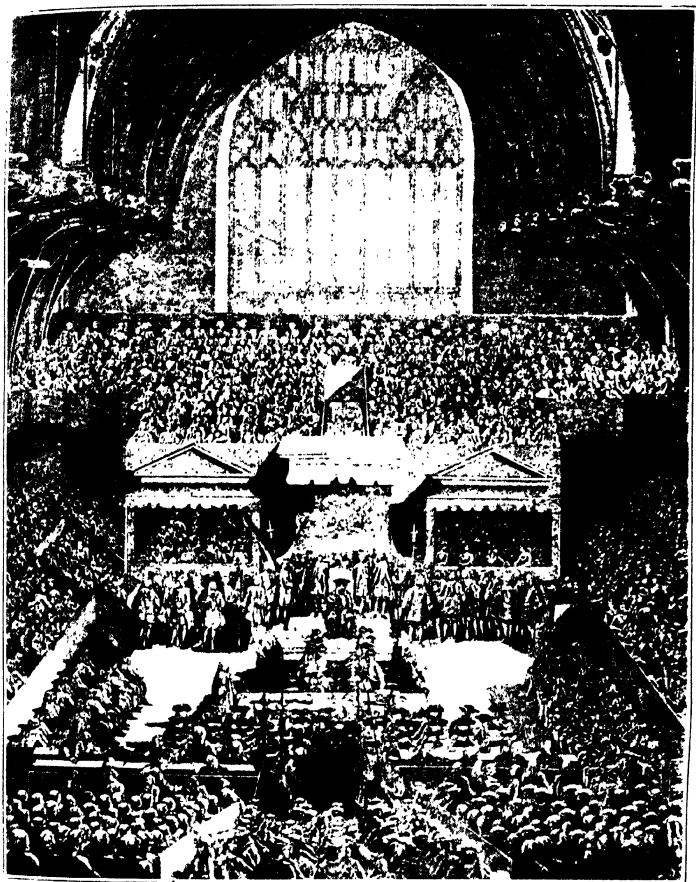


Meanwhile, over here he was sentenced to death, and upon our Ambassador's vehement remonstrance he was arrested and incarcerated in the Bastille. He passed several years in that grim fortress, but obtained his release upon taking holy orders and entering a Jesuit college (St. Omer).

But in 1714, when George I succeeded to the throne, Simon Fraser inherited the barony of Lovat at the corresponding period. Moreover, the title carried with it a large rent-roll. When in the following year the Pretender landed in England he looked around to see in which quarter the wind blew and, the invader evincing anything but enthusiasm towards him, he threw in his lot with "German George." In the ensuing struggle he took the Highland capital and as a reward George I loaded him with praise and honours.

When in 1745 the second Jacobite Rebellion broke out, Lord Lovat staked on the latter, being promised as the spoil of victory a Dukedom. He was now seventy-nine years of age and while he despatched his own son at the head of 1000 men to assist the invader, he was intriguing with the Government in order to bring about the capture of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

After the Battle of Culloden he was taken prisoner and committed for trial before his brother peers in Westminster Hall. Let us pay tribute where we may. Simon Lord Lovat was possessed of extraordinary physical courage—a striking example of a bully being a brave man. He often is, despite the old adage. The two bullies in my house at school afterwards dis-



THE TRIAL OF LORD LOVAT IN WESTMINSTER HALL



tinguished themselves greatly in battle when they became officers of the British Army. So here the eleventh Lord Lovat flipantly told his judges that "it was not worth the fuss to cut off a grey head of eighty years."<sup>1</sup> And what seemed to trouble him most was when his own men gave evidence against him. This would cause him to give vent to terrible bursts of passion. Prior to his execution he was shaved by the prison barber, with whom he cracked jokes, telling him that if he cut his throat the mob would be robbed of the spectacle of a peer undergoing capital punishment. Even on the scaffold itself he jested. A very corpulent man, it required two warders to assist him on to it. When arrived there he pertinently remarked that it was the antithesis of Cerberus. The latter had one body and three heads. But here it was a case of one head and three bodies.

Horace Walpole has much to say of this man. He says in one of his writings, "I see little parts in him, nor attribute much to that cunning for which he is so famous, it might catch wild Highlanders, but the art of dissimulation and flattery is so refined and improved that it is of little use now where it is not very delicate, his character seems a mixture of tyranny and pride in his villainy." But the same writer says that "he died extremely well, without passion, affectation, buffoonery or timidity; his behaviour was natural and intrepid." This last sentence is at variance with the Cerberus incident. But all accounts agree that no French aristocrat died better in the Revolution

<sup>1</sup> He was beheaded, not hanged. (A. L.)

some fifty years later than did this old Scotchman in 1747.

In his own land he was a Caligula. He employed his cook to rid him of secret enemies by the aid of poison. He adopted other methods in his dealings with his avowed foes. He took his revenge upon *them* by pillage and arson.

Another example to show his resemblance to the worst of the Roman Emperors. Two servants married unbeknown to him. For three weeks this despot confined them in a disused well that had been converted into a dungeon.

When confined in the Tower of London he informed his jailers that were he not eighty years of age he would have no difficulty in breaking out and so outvie Jack Sheppard.

Lord Belhaven, in passing sentence upon him by default when as Simon Fraser he fled to France, declared that he merited hanging "five times over in five different places, and on five different counts."

Such was the opinion, not of counsel, but of one of the greatest judges who ever adorned the Scottish Courts. But it cannot be gainsaid that Simon, eleventh Lord Lovat, was true to his Order in one respect. He died game.

## V

### THE FOURTH EARL FERRERS

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IT is impossible to explain the reason, but probably the foremost sentiment inspired in the breasts of many who read my next case is "pity," and yet it is hard to imagine a more brutal murder. Perhaps some of us, like the fourth Lord Ferrers, have at times been prone to melancholia. It will be remembered that in his inimitable essay, "Pen, Pencil, and Poison," Oscar Wilde tells us that eventually Wainwright "came out of the dark waters of melancholy," but this Lord Ferrers never seems to have achieved.

Lord Ferrers married in 1752 the youngest daughter of Sir William Meredith. For some time the couple seem to have lived happily together, but later the frequent potations indulged in by the husband caused him to treat Lady Ferrers with unwarrantable cruelty, so much so that she rejoined her parents and applied to Parliament for redress. As a result an Act was passed, allowing her a separate maintenance derived from her husband's estate, and trustees were appointed, and Mr. Johnson, the family steward, was appointed to receive the rents on her behalf. This Mr. Johnson had lived all his life with the family. He at first refused the offer of administrator, and it was only on

the insistence of Lord Ferrers that he was prevailed upon to accept it.

Mr. Johnson lived at a farm called The Lount, situated on Lord Ferrers' property, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and quite close to Stanton Harold, the family seat. Parenthetically, it may be remarked that in the church of Breedon-on-the-Hill in that neighbourhood the tombs of the Shirleys are to be seen, and the monument to the subject of this special sketch takes the form of a skeleton.

In view of the disturbed state of Lord Ferrers' mind, occasioned by his bouts of drinking, it is small wonder that in his fits of brooding he conceived a violent and a morbid dislike for his unfortunate steward. One day he accused him of having combined with the trustees to prevent his receiving a coal contract, called him a villain, and gave him notice to quit The Lount. But in this his lordship exceeded his power for, under the deed of separation, Mr. Johnson held the lease from the trustees.

From that moment Johnson was a doomed man. On Sunday, January 13, 1760, Lord Ferrers called at The Lount and ordered the steward to come and see him at Stanton on the following Friday (18th), at 3 p.m. His lordship was in the habit of dining at 2 p.m. On that particular Friday, the meal completed, he went to a Mrs. Clifford, who was in the still-room, and told her "to take the children for a walk." It should be mentioned that Mrs. Clifford lived with Lord Ferrers at Stanton, and "the children" were four daughters, the result of the friendship. The



PHIZ'S FAMOUS ILLUSTRATION OF LORD FERRERS SHOOTING  
HIS STEWARD





rest of the household consisted of five menservants, three maids, an old man, and a boy.

Punctually, Mr. Johnson arrived to keep the appointment and was desired to wait awhile in the still-room, and shortly afterwards his lordship called him into his own apartment and locked the door. When they were closeted together, the nobleman required him first to settle an account, and then repeating his charges of villainy, cried out in tones so loud as to be overheard by the maids: "Down on your other knee; declare that you have acted against Lord Ferrers; your time has come, you must die," and then suddenly he drew a loaded pistol from his pocket and deliberately fired at his victim.

The ball entered the body of the unfortunate man. Nevertheless, he succeeded in rising and begged his lordship not to injure him further, and the maids, alarmed at the noise of the report, hurrying to the door, his lordship quitted the room. A surgeon was hastily procured from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and as soon as he was put to bed Johnson was visited by Lord Ferrers and in answer to his inquiry as to how he felt, the steward said that he was dying and begged that his family might be sent for. This was accordingly done and Lord Ferrers followed Miss Johnson, the daughter, into the sick-room, where he proceeded to pull down the bedclothes, "and applied a pledget steeped in arquebusade water" to the wound.

By the time the surgeon arrived his lordship was raving drunk (he is stated to have been sober when the murder was actually committed), and he told the surgeon that the villain was more frightened than hurt,

and that he was on no account to be moved, and that anyone attempting to do so would be shot as well.

Seeing that it was necessary to humour his lordship, the surgeon set about preparing dressings downstairs. While this was going on his lordship, by then maniacal, re-entered the sick-room, and although Mr. Johnson declared that he was dying, and complained of a violent pain in his bowels, Lord Ferrers pulled him by the wig, and was with great difficulty prevented from stripping the clothes from him and striking him.

And although later in the evening he was importuned by Mrs. Clifford that Johnson should be removed to his own home, his lordship forbade it, and declared, "I will keep him here to plague the villain!" He also stated to Miss Johnson that provision would be made for her and her family provided no prosecution followed.

Before retiring to rest he also attempted to square the surgeon—by name Kirkland.

The last-named, however, as soon as he had left Lord Ferrers, fitted up with poles a species of sedan chair, and about two in the morning, having procured a guard, he smuggled Mr. Johnson out of Stanton and conveyed him to The Lount, where he expired seven hours later.

The news quickly spread, and the neighbours repaired to Stanton and set about the arrest of the murderer. There his lordship, partly clad, was seen to be proceeding towards the stables. Whereupon one of the party—by name Springthorpe—advanced,

pistol in hand, and called upon his lordship to surrender. But Lord Ferrers making a movement towards his pocket, Springthorpe hesitated and the quarry was allowed to escape into the house.

The crowd by now had become a large one, and called upon his lordship to come forth, but Ferrers, instead of consenting, opened a garret window and inquired after Johnson. On being told he was dead, he declared it to be a lie, and called on the people to disperse. Then he ordered them to be admitted to the house and given food and drink, but swore that no man should take him alive.

Two hours later a collier named Curtis caught sight of him on the bowling green, armed with a blunderbuss, a brace of pistols, and a dagger. Curtis, nevertheless, undeterred by this, walked up to Ferrers and called upon him to capitulate; and his lordship, struck by the man's courage, laid down his arms, but boasted that he "had killed the villain and gloried in the act."

At first he was conveyed to Leicester Gaol following on the coroner's verdict of "wilful murder." But it being his privilege to be tried by his brother peers, he was, a fortnight later, conveyed in the family landau to the Tower where, under strict surveillance, he was lodged in the Round Tower.

During his confinement, and in fact since his arrest, his conduct was exemplary, except that on occasions he would start up, tear open his waistcoat, and afford other evidences of an unhinged mind. His diet was of the simplest, and the amount of alcohol

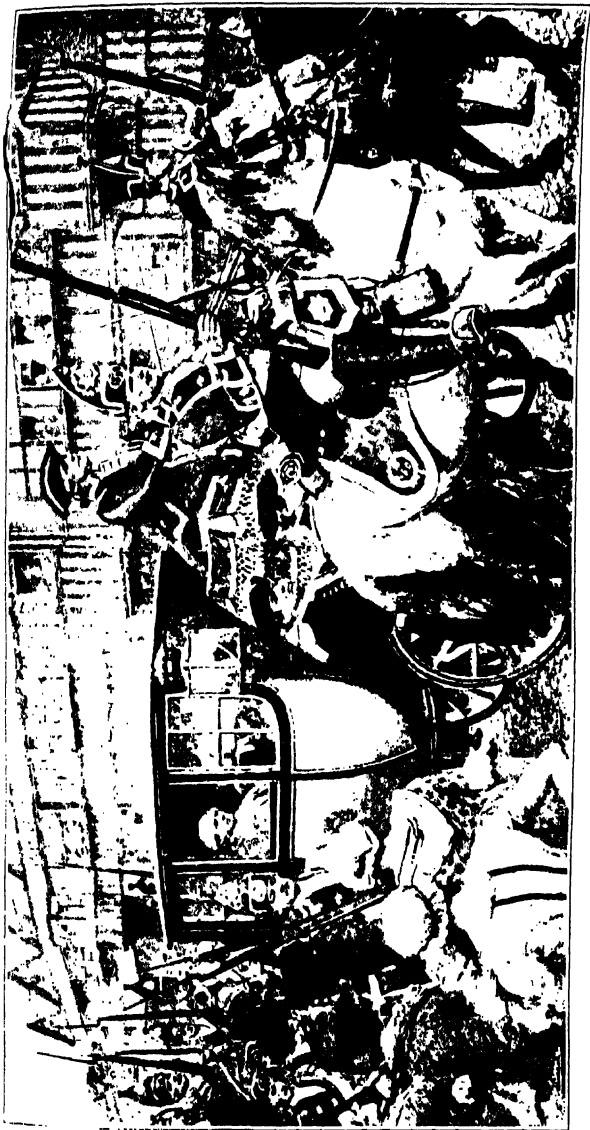
he consumed was negligible. For some reason Mrs. Clifford was refused admission to the Tower, but their daughters were permitted to remain some time with him.

The trial commenced on April 16, and lasted two days. On the advice of his friends, insanity was pleaded, but his lordship elected to defend himself. When he was found guilty he stated that he had only taken that line of defence to gratify his friends. His brother peers, meanwhile, decided that however eccentric he might be, he was still accountable for his actions.

He was sentenced to be hanged and anatomised three days later, but in consideration of his rank the execution was postponed from April 21 to May 5. During this period he made a will, leaving £1300 to Mr. Johnson's children, £1000 apiece to his four natural daughters, and a life annuity of £60 to Mrs. Clifford.

The day before his execution, he was visited in the Tower by his brother, Washington Shirley, to whom he expressed the hope that his divorced wife would suffer a worse death than he himself was about to suffer. *This wish, no doubt, gave rise to the well-known "prophecy" tradition—for his wife, having married Lord Frederick Campbell, was burned to death some years later, at their house at Sevenoaks.*

On May 5 the mournful procession set out from the Tower to Tyburn. His lordship, handsomely attired, drove in his own landau, accompanied by the apologetic Sheriff. Many other carriages followed suit, and a strong body of "horse grenadiers." His



Lord Palmerston, handsomely attired, drove from the Tower to Exbury in his own landau, accompanied by the apologetic  
 "Sherry and a strong body of 500 first grenadiers."  
*The King's Progress of David W. Pritchard, Esq.*



lordship declared himself much upset by the King's decision that he must suffer at Tyburn, and not in the Tower, where his ancestor, Lord Essex—Queen Elizabeth's favourite—had been beheaded.

The journey was a very slow one, and lasted no less than two hours and three-quarters. Twice his lordship essayed to prolong it, once when he said he was thirsty and would like a glass of wine and water, and again when he was near the scaffold he asked to be allowed to speak to Mrs. Clifford, whom he had caught sight of. But on each occasion he was dissuaded by the Sheriff because of the enormous crowds, Lord Ferrers remarking, "I suppose it is because they have never seen a lord hanged before."

On ascending the scaffold, at the solicitation of Mr. Humphries, the chaplain, his lordship readily knelt and joined with him in the Lord's Prayer. Having been presented by Lord Ferrers with his watch, the Sheriff then retired, and the hangman adjusted the silken noose. His lordship expressed a wish that he might be buried at Stanton, and his last words on earth were, "O God, forgive me all my errors, pardon all my sins!"

The Ferrers case stands, perhaps, supreme "as an instance of the vindication of the law upon a person in the highest rank." Nay, more, it goes perhaps too far. Had Ferrers been tried to-day, Broadmoor would probably have been his fate. Most probable of all, had he lived in our time, he would have been incarcerated long before he attained the age of thirty-nine—that is, when he committed the murder.



After his execution the following lines were said to have been found in his apartment in the Tower :

“ In doubt I lived, in doubt I die,  
Yet stand prepared the vast abyss to try,  
And, undismayed, expect eternity.”

## VI

### THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON

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**F**EW more extraordinary marriages have taken place in the peerage than that of Miss Chudleigh and Lord Bristol. The lady was a daughter of Colonel Chudleigh, a descendant of the old Devonshire family of that name, and at the age of eighteen, through the good offices of that famous politician—Pulteney—she obtained the coveted post of Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales. A young aristocrat, with both the physical and mental attributes of Hypatia, she soon had the Court of George II at her feet. Among her greatest admirers was the Duke of Hamilton, who afterwards married the celebrated Miss Gunning.

It was while on a visit to an aunt by name Hanmer, that the disaster occurred. For there she met a naval officer, a Hervey, son of Lord Bristol. Mrs. Hanmer endeavoured to bring about a match between the two, but her niece was secretly betrothed to the Duke of Hamilton. And, in view of the fact that her niece's feeling towards Captain Hervey was one of aversion, it is difficult to probe the workings of Mrs. Hanmer's mind. Matchmaker she may have been—most women are, though perhaps not often with such disastrous

results as in this case—but she was certainly not a worldly lady, for the Duke was the greatest *parti*. So determined was Mrs. Hanmer to bring about the Hervey-Chudleigh union that she intercepted the Duke's letters. The result was that, as in the case of Claire in *Le Maître de Forges*, wounded sorely in her pride, and, the Captain being assiduous and deferential in his attentions, Miss Chudleigh married out of pique, in her case, Hervey. But alas! unlike the heroine of Ohnet's masterpiece, with the most terrible *dénouement*.

If they did not part at the church door they only passed one night together, and the bride, concealing the real reason for the projected separation, pretended to her husband that she would lose her post if the marriage was made public.

Poor Captain Hervey, like the majority of naval officers, had little or nothing besides his pay, and the salary his wife received was indispensable to keep the pot boiling. Mrs. Hervey herself declared that she was only happy when her husband was at sea. But the time came when the husband tired of his anomalous position. After threatening exposure of the marriage and indulging in bitter epistolary recriminations, he prevailed upon his icy consort to grant him an interview. Tremendous precautions were taken to ensure strict secrecy. The only other occupant of the house where the meeting took place was the black servant that every fashionable household of that period boasted. At that interview Hervey succeeded in asserting his marital rights.

In novels and plays an incident like this, as in

promiscuous wayside amours, is always attended with result. Generally speaking, such a happening is untrue to life. But the case of Captain and Mrs. Hervey proved an exception to the rule, and the latter repaired to the Metropolis, where in due course she gave birth to a boy. The poor infant, however, departed this life before he had had time to do any serious harm to anybody.

The Duke of Hamilton shortly afterwards returned from abroad and, the truth about the suppressed letters coming to light, he became more ardent than ever, and there was a fearful scene between Mrs. Hanmer and her niece. One of the strangest features in this case, as I have said, is the motive of the aunt in forcing the Hervey marriage upon her niece, but still more strange—even inexplicable—is Mrs. Hanmer's reason for not placing the position before her sister, i.e. disclosing the true state of affairs to Mrs. Hervey's mother. As it was, the secret of the clandestine marriage was strictly observed. Meanwhile, not only the Duke, but other distinguished suitors met with an unaccountable rejection.

So, to avoid an impossible position, Mrs. Hervey, travelling as Miss Chudleigh, repaired to the Continent, where she not only became a personal friend of the Emperor Frederick of Prussia, but the bosom companion of the Electress of Saxony. Later, on returning to England, she became the leader of the Chesterfieldian set, that is to say the leader of fashion. But then commenced purgatory for her, as her husband was a permanent menace to her,—so much so that he threatened to disclose the truth to the Princess of

Wales. Then it was that Mrs. Hervey took her courage in her hands and herself confessed everything to her Royal mistress. It was a wise stroke. And as a result the Princess became as staunch a friend as the Electress.

Then it was that our heroine stepped into crime. The clergyman who had married the Herveys was dead. While the attention of the keeper of the register was distracted, Mrs. Hervey deliberately tore out the fateful page. But almost immediately afterwards she managed to have it reinserted. For one morning Captain Hervey woke up and found himself a belted Earl. That was a very different proposition to his wife. Though her feelings towards him underwent no change, "Countess of Bristol" (the Marquisate was not conferred until later) on a card was a useful card to hold in the gamble of life. By the aid of a specious bribe, the clerk to the registry managed to have the certificate replaced. It must, however, to a certain extent be admitted that fortune treated her as its football, for no sooner did she proclaim herself Lady Bristol than she fell in love with a man who, like the Duke of Hamilton, boasted the strawberry leaves, to wit the Duke of Kingston. In fact, in view of the impossibility of obtaining her freedom, Lady Bristol gave up everything for him and he was her lover for many years, until one day Lord Bristol himself fell in love with somebody, with the result that a collusion followed. What is known as a jactitation suit commenced, and the vital evidence of the marriage being suppressed, the union was declared to be null and void. Pursuant to this the Duke of Kingston

and Miss Chudleigh were publicly joined together in holy matrimony.

For some years all went smoothly, until one day the Duke had a stroke. The Duchess, in great alarm, sent for the family lawyer, for the Duchess knew that the Duke's will was to the effect that, should she remarry after his decease, her income would cease. Presumably the Duke was so fond of her that the idea of another stepping into his shoes was unthinkable. It must be mentioned that the ducal property was unentailed, and that His Grace of Kingston had absolute disposal of it. Accordingly the Duchess attempted to induce the lawyer to draw up a will revoking the proviso of widowhood. But she met with a flat refusal, for the lawyer declared the Duke to be incapable of executing any will owing to his unfortunate physical condition. Bitter recriminations followed. But, on reflection, we see later on that the man of law was Her Grace's true friend. Such a will as she desired would most certainly have been upset, whereas, as things stood, she was handsomely provided for. Consequent upon her marriage being invalidated, the Duchess would have been hoist with her own petard.

After the Duke's demise, the Duchess paid a long visit to the Eternal City, where she was the guest of the Pope himself (Clement XIV). It was while she was sunning herself in one of the Cardinals' palaces placed at her disposal by His Holiness himself, that the storm burst at home. And in the most terrible of guises—blackmail. It happened that a former servant, by name Mrs. Cradock, had been a witness at the Hervey

wedding. She fell upon evil days, and applied to the family lawyer (whose name, by the way, was Field) for pecuniary assistance. She then threatened to tell "all she knew." She was challenged to do her worst, and she picked up the gauntlet. In those times the admirable law of to-day was not in force. To-day she would have been arrested, the nature of her accusations have remained unpublished, and she herself would have received anything from ten years' penal servitude to a life sentence. But as it was only the middle of the eighteenth century she went to a Mr. Evelyn Meadows, nephew of the late Duke. This particular nephew was an object of antipathy to his uncle and his name was missing in the will. The result was that he at once instituted a suit against the Duchess for bigamy. The Duchess immediately set about her return from Rome in order to escape a sentence of outlawry. And this epoch in her career was the subject of Phiz's<sup>1</sup> well known caricature. For this resourceful lady could not return to England without what is the root of all evil—or rather the want of it. During her sojourn in Rome she had banked with the English banker, Jenkins. But the prosecutors of the bigamy suit had lost no time in "getting at" Mr. Jenkins. Consequently, he was never to be found when Her Grace honoured him with a call. Accordingly, one day, before the Duchess attempted to see him, she slipped a brace of pistols into the capacious pockets which adorned the costumes of those times, and on being told as usual that the banker was out, she inserted one of the pistols in the aperture as the servant

<sup>1</sup> My wife's uncle. (A. L.)



PHIZ'S AMUSING CARICATURE OF THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON  
AND HER BANKER





attempted to close the door, with a *j'y suis, j'y reste* air that brooked no misunderstanding. Mr. Jenkins, who was indoors all the time, at length thought it more sensible to face the music. The interview was not of the usual kind that one expects between a banker and a wealthy client. (It must be noted that Mr. Jenkins held securities of the Duchess to a considerable amount.) But at length, the Duchess's patience becoming exhausted, she clinched matters by covering him with both pistols.

This method of persuasion by the Duchess proved extraordinarily effective, and as much money as Her Grace desired—nay, even more—was forthcoming in an incredibly short space of time. The Duchess's long journey to England was unusually uncomfortable, as she developed what was probably Roman fever, but at length, recovering, she reached her destination, and immediately some of the leading members of the aristocracy vied with each other for the honour of being allowed to be her bailsman.

It was at this juncture that the Duchess showed especially her strength of character, for Mrs. Cradock promised to efface herself, provided a certain amount of hush-money was allowed her. The utmost that the Duchess would offer was an annuity of £20, and even this must be accompanied by an undertaking on the part of the recipient to bury herself in the wilds of Derbyshire. Mrs. Cradock's reply was in the negative. So, as far as this enemy was concerned, the Duchess had, perforce, to await events, i.e. the approaching trial. But meanwhile, one grieves to say, another blackmailer appeared on the scene, and

it is specially distressing to state that he was one of the most brilliant exponents of the Art of Thespis, namely the celebrated actor, Foote. Fully cognisant of the leading details of the Duchess's life, he wrote a travesty on her, naming it "The Trip to Calais." Armed with the manuscript, he waited upon her and informed her that, unless she paid him two thousand guineas, the piece would be produced at the Haymarket Theatre. After considerable palaver, as much as £1600 was offered for the suppression, but Foote was obdurate and held out for the full amount, nay, more, he demanded a further sum as compensation for the out-of-pocket expenses of the scene-painting. However much one may condemn the Duchess's character, one rejoices to learn that Foote never obtained a penny from her, nor was the satire ever produced. Her Grace consulted her chief bailisman—the Duke of Newcastle. He listened to her story and then executed a master-stroke. He went to the Lord Chamberlain of that time—Lord Hertford—placed him *au fait* with the scandalous facts, and the latter at once censored it.

One is naturally inquisitive as to how far Foote went. In his play the Duchess was called Lady Kitty Crocodile, but the eighteenth century was a licentious one, not only in Paris, but in London, and there were midnight tableaux of a mythological character, depicting the worship of those ever-popular deities, Bacchus and Venus. At these "classical studies" the Duchess showed herself in what George du Maurier in *Trilby* styled "The Altogether," possibly even representing Aphrodite herself.

But the time of Her Grace's trial was fast approaching, and, naturally, she claimed her privilege as a peeress to be tried in Westminster Hall before her congeners. Before the proceedings took place a strong hint was given to the Duchess that £10,000 would square everybody, and that the prosecution would be withdrawn. But so sure was she of her acquittal that she resolutely refused to listen to the counsels of her friends. She satisfied herself that only Mrs. Cradock was to be feared and so she evolved a scheme to get her abroad. It was as follows. Her Grace, disguised as a boy, was to have an interview with Mrs. Cradock, and at a certain signal reveal herself and settle terms. But, somehow or other, the prosecution got wind of this and the Duchess, dressed as a boy, waited at the trysting-place in vain. Mrs. Cradock never appeared.

Accordingly, on April 15, 1776, the trial duly took place. The Queen graced the proceedings with her presence, as did the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, and other members of the Royal Family. Moreover, the Duchess was fortified by a letter from the Electress of Saxony, who wrote, "You have long experienced my love, my revenue, my protection, my everything, you may command. Come then, my dear life, to an asylum of peace. Quit a country where, if you are bequeathed a cloak, some pretender may start up and ruin you by law to prove it not your property. Let me have you at Dresden."

A remarkable letter indeed! Judged from any standpoint!

The trial lasted six days. The Duchess pleaded

"Not Guilty." By far the most important witness was Anne Cradock, in fact the only one who really counted, for most of the others quoted her. On April 22, the last day of the trial (Sunday, of course, intervening), the Duchess was requested to withdraw from the Bar pending their lordships' consideration of the verdict. Their lordships declared her to be guilty of bigamy. Accordingly Black Rod called upon the Duchess to resume her former place. Upon her reappearance at the Bar, the Lord High Steward acquainted her with the finding and put the usual question as to whether she had anything to say why judgment should not be pronounced against her. Whereat the Duchess merely handed to the clerk seated near her a paper, on which "was written, "I plead the privilege of the Peerage." Thereupon, the Lord High Steward informed Her Grace that Their Lordships would allow the plea, adding, "Madam, you will be discharged upon paying the usual fees." But now reaction set in, the Duchess fainted, and strong and willing arms carried her out of the hall. So simple! And perhaps some may exclaim, "What a waste of public money!" But not of time. The setting was superb. All Europe talked of nothing else the whole week. Not since the trial of Charles I had Westminster Hall known the like.

Being again Countess of Bristol, our heroine fled to Calais, for the Duke's relatives attempted to prevent her leaving the country. Foiled in that, they essayed to have the Duke's will upset, but here again, after much litigation, the Duchess (for so we will continue to call her) emerged triumphant. Possessed

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now of a vast fortune, she proceeded to make ducks and drakes of it. Among other things she purchased a house at Montmartre, overlooking the clause "Caveat Emptor." The house was in danger of falling down. She sued the owner for selling it under false pretences. When in Paris she was told that she had lost her action against him fury caused her to break a blood-vessel. On August 26, 1796, against the entreaties of her domestics, she insisted upon getting up. She half staggered to a sofa, and then sank down on it, assisted by two maids who held her hands. A few minutes later, and the coldness of those same hands proclaimed that she had gone before a Higher Tribunal than the peers who had sat in judgment upon her in Westminster Hall.

## VII

### THE DUC DU CHOISEUL PRASLIN

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IN the days before King Edward the Seventh's wonderful achievement in bringing about the *Entente Cordiale* it will be recalled that all French caricaturists laid themselves out to depict the English of both sexes as being repellently ugly. The men were drawn with ruddy Dundreary whiskers and, like their womenfolk, with projecting teeth. That master craftsman, Caran d'Ache, in delineating various nationalities at the Opera, presents two Englishmen as representative of their country. Both are seated in the stalls *wearing* Glengarry caps, attired for grouse shooting, and leaning solemnly on two Harry Lauder-like sticks. Says one to the other, "Monsieur Dupuis performs very well indeed his character," to which the other replies, "Ah, yes" (of course), "it is very gay, it is very foolish indeed."

In the same way our women were represented in addition to the teeth as possessing splay feet. Nor was the caricature confined to the artist. The greatest masters of prose invariably drew their Englishwomen with unprepossessing exteriors. To be more precise, of the type that one frequently sees at Continental tables-d'hôte, but never in their own country. So perhaps the caricaturists had a *raison d'être* for this.

An exception of course is Daudet's "La Comtesse Sarah." Frenchwomen admittedly are born with the knack of putting their clothes on better than ours do. Has anybody ever seen an ill-dressed Frenchwoman? And often with little or no outlay on her part. They are, too, more vivacious, which may be due to the superior climate. And no Frenchwoman was ever a snob. But as regards looks *per se*—regularity of feature—our women predominate. If they do not show themselves to the best advantage (and often immense sums produce a result that reflects little credit on their taste), to use a slang expression, "That is *their* funeral." The *material* is there. King Edward killed the French caricaturing of English women. But if his great work is nullified in years to come, and is added to the list of unpleasant post-war legacies, the practice may or may not revive. That is on the knees of the respective politicians of the two countries. But in describing Englishwomen as plain, the great French writers have by no means always held them up to ridicule. The outstanding example of this is, of course, the world's greatest writer of the short story. For sheer pathos it would be hard, if not impossible, to equal his "Miss Harriet." These are Maupassant's words, "I opened the window to its fullest extent and drew back the curtains that the whole heavens might look in upon us, and bending over the icy corpse, I took in my hands her head, and slowly, *without terror or disgust*, I imprinted upon those lips a kiss, a long kiss—the first they had ever received."

And if caricaturing of Englishwomen was the fashion in France up to some quarter of a century



ago, it was not borne out by the behaviour of Frenchmen themselves. Many of them who bore great and notorious names "fell for" Englishwomen, and not even Nana herself in fiction collected more scalps than Cora Pearl. Frenchmen have made as big fools of themselves over our women as they have over their own, though not with the terrible result that attended the particular case that I am about to narrate.

We all know that the Choiseuls are one of the greatest families not only in France, but in Europe. And like most great families it boasted many branches. At the head of these was the Duc du Choiseul Praslin. As a boy of two-and-twenty he had married the daughter of one of Napoleon's generals—to wit Marshal Sebastiani. Despite this fact, when Napoleon's star had set and the Bourbon régime was in the ascendant, the Marshal accepted service under the banner of the latter. The marriage between the Duc and Duchesse took place in 1826. Contrary to most French marriages of rank, it was a *mariage d'inclination* and not a *mariage de convenance*. No less than ten children were the result of the union, but despite this marked tribute to their affection, the melancholy aphorism that "man is a polygamous animal" was once more evidenced, and after the birth of the tenth child the father's affection cooled, so that fourteen years after the marriage the couple, though residing in the palatial town mansion, were as widely apart matrimonially as though domiciled under separate roofs. But when affairs came to this pass the father insisted that the tutelage of his children must be *his* department. A man of irascible temperament, violent

scenes transpired as the result of this decision, not only between husband and wife, but between the former and successive governesses, for all that were engaged sought a change of address with startling rapidity. But there came one day a new face, and behold the loom of drama. This lady was of English blood, although she bore a French name, and I think that the possible explanation is that she came from Jersey. Her name was de Luzy. At first she was engaged only for the eldest daughter, and at the time there were two other governesses engaged with her—or perhaps in all the circumstances it would be more correct to say that they were on probation with her.

There is a striking analogy between this case and that of the unhappy Dr. Cross.<sup>1</sup> Like the unfortunate victim of the doctor's unbridled passion, there is not the slightest doubt that Mademoiselle de Luzy gave her admirer no encouragement at all, but the result in each instance was equally tragic. Alas! in the high world in our country we all know of establishments where in private the host and hostess never speak to each other, only on formal occasions do they recognise each other's presence. (Two especially *sautent aux yeux*.) But in cases where employers fall in love with the governesses to their children the fact that the governesses are undesigning and perfectly innocent of all ulterior motive weighs nought in the eyes of the mistress of the house. It is the governess who absorbs her husband's affections, and therefore she is the cause of all the trouble. Utterly unjust and illogical of course, but equally comprehensible. Well, the

<sup>1</sup> See *Thou Shalt Do No Murder*. (Messrs. Hurst & Blackett.)

Duchesse de Choiseul Praslin became frantically jealous of Mademoiselle de Luzy. The falseness of the position must have been accentuated because if by chance the Duchesse entered the schoolroom while the children were at their lessons, and she found the Duc there, they ignored each other. Neither deemed it one of the "formal occasions" to which I have just alluded. So intolerable did the situation become that only the personal intervention of Louis Phillippe and his queen—great friends of the Duchesse—prevented the latter from instituting divorce proceedings. As regards Mademoiselle de Luzy, she decided to end the equivocal state of affairs and sought an engagement at a school kept by a certain Madame Lemaire. The latter naturally demanded a written character from the Duchesse. This would have been essential in any case, but with rumour of the Duc's infatuation so rife in Paris the precaution became doubly so. Madame Lemaire was taken with Mademoiselle de Luzy, and believed in her, all the more because the applicant suggested their repairing together to the Praslin mansion and obtaining the requisite credentials. Accordingly, one August evening they set out together.

The Duchesse refused point-blank to give Mademoiselle de Luzy a character. As I have said, this was in August. The year 1842. It is unusual in that month to find a family mansion open either in Paris, or in London, as this was. (Most family mansions in London nowadays are offices, those intact are as rare a spectacle as a hatchment.) The Duc and Duchesse, however, had only arrived in Paris from

the country a day or two before, and probably were only "*passagers*."

That same night her maid took leave of the Duchesse and as she left the bedroom the maid caught sight of the Duc in an adjoining room. This same room gave on to a staircase which led to the Duc's private apartments. A second door led from the room into the grounds, but this was always locked the last thing at night by one of the domestics.

Between four and five in the morning the Duc's valet was awoke by continued bell-ringing upstairs. Summoning the Duchesse's maid, the valet darted downstairs and found the room locked that adjoined the Duchesse's apartments. Frightful screams emanated from within. In vain the valet essayed to burst open the door. The maid then joining him the two descended to the great hall with a view of hastening up another staircase that led to the Duchesse's apartments. But here again they were frustrated, for this door was also locked. All this time the heart-rending cries had continued, but suddenly by contrast a dead silence prevailed. Then the valet discovered that the door leading into the grounds was mysteriously open and, darting out, he sought the assistance of the concierge. Proceeding up the staircase leading from the grounds, they thus gained admission to the Duchesse's bedchamber. It was of course broad daylight outside, but the persiennes were closed, and the room itself was in pitch darkness. Upon the concierge procuring a candle a fearful spectacle presented itself. Propped against the sofa, her *chemise de nuit* bathed in blood, lay the Duchesse, life being

quite extinct. Bad news travels quickly, and the room soon filled. And then the Duc himself appeared, but not from his bedroom. He appeared by the staircase that led from the great hall. It was afterwards stated that huge volumes of smoke had been seen issuing from the chimney in the Duc's bedroom, but when he was sought for there the apartment was empty and he now arrived upon the scene of the tragedy, as I have remarked, by another entrance.

The Duc, who seemed beside himself with agitation, continued shouting for a doctor, although it was obvious that it was all too late. The Duchesse's room was a species of shambles, and it was apparent that the unfortunate lady had fought desperately for her life. Subsequent medical examination proved that she had been stabbed several times with a sharp-pointed instrument (afterwards proved to be a dagger).

A thorough search of the Duc's bedroom revealed many most suspicious circumstances. The room itself was in dire disorder. There was no water. On the other hand, several freshly washed articles of apparel were hanging out to dry.

The Duc stated that he had been roused by shouts of "Murder" from the grounds below. On his way down there he stopped at his wife's room, and receiving no answer he lit a candle and discovered the awful truth. Before he could summon assistance his valet and the concierge arrived.

Such a thin explanation of his behaviour could have but one result. The Duc was arrested.

Subsequent examination showed that one of the Duc's hands was badly torn, and one of his thumbs

had been bitten, and there were bruises on his body. A partially consumed hilt on the hearth of the Duc's bedroom discovered among smouldering ashes accounted for the smoke that had been observed outside.

The Duc at once took poison. As a result he was in no condition to answer the judge's interrogatories. It is said that upon being taken back to prison he recovered under medical treatment. But on the third day the symptoms reappeared with redoubled violence and on that same day he expired! There can be no doubt that a further and much stronger dose was administered either by himself or by someone in the prison. In any case the authorities connived at it in much the same way as forty years later they supplied Voirbo with the means of self-destruction.

The methods employed by Dr. Cross and the Duc were directly opposed, and supply an object-lesson. The doctor had recourse to poison. The more aristocratic culprit favoured L'Assommoir, or Bill Sikes' methods. The reflection provides an interesting study.

A painful feature of this distressing case was that letters were found after the tragedy written to her husband by the Duchesse, all breathing to the end her undying affection for him.

In conclusion, there is a similarity between the Duc and Lord Ferrers. The broody, irascible temper of both terminated in a tragedy that culminated not merely in a dark, but a violent deed. But here again we are confronted with the proposition whether the most cruel and subtle means of murder, i.e. poison,

is ever less to be condemned than the bludgeon, the pistol, or the dagger. Certainly neither the fourth Lord Ferrers nor the Duc de Choiseul Praslin could have hoped to avoid detection by the methods that *they* employed. In fact, there are details with regard to the Duchesse's wounds that are unprintable and which denote a maniacal sadic savagery. But ere he expired upon that third day in prison the Duc expressed the deepest contrition for his appalling crime, praying fervently for Divine mercy.

**PART II**  
**UNDISCOVERED MURDERS**





# I

## MADELEINE SMITH

**W**HATEVER opinion one may hold as to the innocence or guilt of the subject of this sketch, one must abide by the verdict of her fellow-countrymen, and therefore the murderer of L'Angelier is presumably undiscovered, assuming, of course, that we rule out the theory of suicide. The consensus of opinion in this case, however, is well expressed in the words of a woman who, during the trial, exclaimed, "If she didn't poison him she ought to have done." L'Angelier was the worst form of blackmailer, his victim being a young girl whom he had seduced. The most loathsome form of putting into practice the most loathsome of all crimes.

The Madeleine Smith case differs from any other because although there has generally been a morbid, reprehensible tendency in murder cases to withhold pity for the victim, in this instance the very character of L'Angelier precludes any kindly feeling on his behalf. And if the photograph of the murdered man which I here reproduce is anything like the original, then I think most people will agree that anyone responsible for his removal would be entitled to rank as a Public Benefactor.

Recently Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes has published

another of her inimitable stories founded on famous murders, and her latest—*Letty Lynton*—deals with the Madeleine Smith case. Only, scoundrel and blackmailer as he is, Axel in the novel is not such a contemptible figure as L'Angelier, there is a soupçon of virility in the unpleasant Swede.

In dealing with a case upon which whole books have been written, it is extremely difficult to compress the facts in potted form, but, space being so limited, the attempt must be made, and I think that I can impart at least one new feature to this cause célèbre.

In 1857 there resided at 7 Blythswood Square, Glasgow, an architect, by name James Smith, his wife, and five children, the names of the latter being Madeleine, Bessie, Janet, John, and James.

Mr. Smith possessed a country house at Row, on the Clyde, called Rowaleyn, as well as his town house, And as a matter of fact he had only resided in Blythswood Square since 1856 (a year before the tragedy); previous to that his town residence had been in India Street. Accounts differ as to how Madeleine first met L'Angelier. The latter was a packing clerk and he was acquainted with a mutual friend, named Robert Baird, in the employ of a bank. But in spite of L'Angelier's importunities, Baird refused to introduce his friend to Madeleine, and the probability is that, with true French polish, L'Angelier introduced himself to the girl when she was out walking. L'Angelier came over first to Scotland in 1843—to Dundee. In 1848 he returned to his native land and served in the Revolution of that year in the National Guard. After the abdication of Louis Philippe he



PIERRE L'ANGELIER



seems to have drifted back to Scotland, for in 1851 we find him engaged as odd man at the Rainbow Hotel at Edinburgh, where he shared a bed with a waiter. But the following year he rose in the social scale, he was employed by a Dundee nurseryman named Laird at nine shillings a week and all found. In 1857 he is a packing clerk at a warehouse at 10 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, owned by Messrs. Huggins, and he is in receipt of a hundred pounds a year.

Like the worst specimens of his race, that is to say that class of foreigner utterly unimbued with a single instinct of a gentleman, he was never tired of boasting of his conquests over the fair sex. One knows the type so well—kiss and tell. And if the philanderer has not always succeeded in his bestial pursuits, he never fails to assure his acquaintances that success not only attended his efforts, but he met with little or no resistance. But with Madeleine Smith on the scene his tactics changed. There is little doubt that from the first he was keenly alive to the possibilities of an alliance with the daughter of such well-to-do parents and that if he got her into his power, the rest would be easy.

L'Angelier lodged at 11 Franklin Place, Glasgow. On the morning of February 20, 1857, when his landlady went to call him, she found him very ill. He said that on the evening before as he was returning home he was seized with violent spasms in his stomach and thought that he would have died before he could climb into his bed. At intervals during the night he had vomited a greenish substance. Yet he was able to go to the warehouse that day. Four days later

Mrs. Jenkins was aroused at four in the morning by hearing cries from his room. The symptoms were the same as on February 20, but this time the sufferer was shivering and complained not only of cold but of thirst. A doctor, called in, prescribed for a bilious attack, with the result that L'Angelier was able to procure a week's leave and go to Edinburgh.

On March 22, he returned to Franklin Place from the Bridge of Allan, where he had been staying for a few days. He informed Mrs. Jenkins that he would be very late that night and he did not return until half-past two in the morning and he at once commenced ringing the bell violently. Upon which Mrs. Jenkins hastened from her room and found her lodger in the hall doubled up with pain. He told her that his symptoms of the previous month had recurred, and she assisted him to his room where he again vomited a greenish substance. At five o'clock his condition became worse and Mrs. Jenkins herself ran out to fetch a Dr. Steven. This gentleman was apparently of the opinion of Sir Harry Lauder, and, while thinking that "it's nice to get up in the morning," evidently thought it was nicer to remain in bed, for he told Mrs. Jenkins to go back and give L'Angelier twenty-five drops of laudanum and to apply a mustard plaster. But two hours later, in response to a second request from Mrs. Jenkins, Dr. Steven came in *propria persona* and injected morphia. At nine o'clock Mrs. Jenkins asked L'Angelier if he would care to see anybody, and he expressed a wish that a Miss Perry,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Miss Perry is the only woman I have ever heard of with the Christian name of Arthur, her full name being Mary Arthur Perry. (A. L.)

who lived in Renfield Street, should be fetched. Shortly afterwards the doctor called again, but this time found his patient beyond human aid. And when Miss Perry called at ten o'clock, in response to the summons, L'Angelier had been dead some half-hour.

Miss Perry plays a most intriguing part in the drama. She was obviously very fond of L'Angelier, yet, according to the facts that were elucidated, and in view of her own evidence, she was a letter-carrier between L'Angelier and Madeleine, and was content that her house should be a house of assignation. Moreover, L'Angelier seems to have confided in her as to the progress of his attachment for "Mimi," as he called Madeleine, and also to have been equally confidential when his inamorata began to cool off. But it is of the utmost importance to cite these words in her evidence, "He (L'Angelier) offered to break off the engagement but was not anxious to do so. She would not accept this. He said that about February she proposed the return of the letters on both sides. *He said he refused to do that but that he offered to give the letters to her father. I did not understand the meaning to be that he threatened to show the letters to her father. I understood that to be a consent by him to give up the engagement, and he so represented it. Miss Smith would not accede to that proposal, and the engagement remained unbroken at Miss Smith's desire.*"

Clearly then, in the innocence of her heart, Miss Perry never has an inkling as to what use L'Angelier intended to put Madeleine's damning love-letters; in other words, Miss Perry has no suspicion that L'Angelier is a vile blackmailer.



It has been suggested that L'Angelier committed suicide with the object of throwing suspicion upon Madeleine. It can, I think, be proved that L'Angelier never committed suicide at all. For when he asked Mrs. Jenkins to send for Miss Perry it was in answer to the landlady's query. L'Angelier did not *suggest* sending for Miss Perry. And no sooner had he asked Mrs. Jenkins to send for Miss Perry than he added these striking words, "If I could only get a little sleep I think I should be well." These are not the words of a suicide. Moreover, it was brought out during the trial that nobody would commit suicide by taking arsenic from time to time, with its accompanying agonies and retchings. When suicides poison themselves, one dose is fatal.

When L'Angelier died on March 24, 1857, in his coat-pocket was found a letter dated three days previously, and which had been posted in Glasgow.

"Why, my beloved, did you not come to me? Oh, my beloved, are you ill? Come to me. Sweet one, I waited and waited for you, but you came not. I shall wait again to-morrow night—same hour and arrangement. Oh, come, sweet love, my own dear love of a sweetheart. Come, beloved, and clasp me to your heart; come and we shall be happy. A kiss, fond love, adieu with tender embraces. Ever believe me to be your own ever dear fond MIMI!"

But when L'Angelier's lodgings were searched, over 500 letters from Madeleine Smith were dis-

covered and impounded, and on March 31 she was arrested on the charge of murder and after the usual preliminaries before the Sheriffs (as is the procedure in Scotland) she was committed for trial in the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh, on Tuesday, June 30, 1857. The judges were the Lord Justice Clerk Hope, and Lords Hardyside and Ivory. For the Crown the counsel were the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor-General, and Mr. McKenzie. For the panel (as is the Scottish term for the prisoner) were Mr. John Inglis (then the Dean of Faculty, afterwards Lord Justice General of Scotland), and Messrs. George Young and Moncrieff. Although well-off, Mr. Smith would have been hard put to it to brief such expensive counsel, but so great was the sympathy for his daughter that some of the leading business men of Glasgow subscribed largely towards her defence. The trial occupied nine days. Madeleine was accused of poisoning L'Angelier with arsenic, introduced into coffee or cocoa, on three occasions between February 19, and March 23. Mr. Murdoch, a chemist, deposed that Madeleine Smith purchased arsenic from him for weed-killing purposes on February 21, March 6, and March 18. At once the defence seized upon the point that if the accused had purchased arsenic on February 21, she could not have administered it to the dead man on February 19. Dr. Penny, the official expert, testified to finding no less than eighty-two grains of arsenic in the stomach of L'Angelier. Christina McKenzie (*née* Haggart) testified that she had been in the service of the Smiths and had let J'Angelier into the house, both in India

Street and in Blythwood Square, besides acting as letter-carrier. Some amusement in Court was caused by her bearing the same name as one of the Counsel for the Crown.

In her sworn declaration Madeleine stated that it was three weeks before his death that she last saw L'Angelier. On March 20 she wrote him a note telling him to come and see her on the following night. *He never answered that note, nor did he keep the tryst.* She remembered once handing him some cocoa out of her window, but that was some time ago, and then he hardly tasted it. She had frequently made purchases of arsenic, but that was for a preparation for a cosmetic. On March 18 she bought arsenic of a man named Currie. She had also bought arsenic at Murdoch's and probably told them both that it was for rat-killing or weed-killing, as the cosmetic was a secret. She said that all her purchases of arsenic were made quite overtly; upon one occasion she was with the daughter of Dr. Buchanan, of Dumbarton, and she always signed her name in the poison-book. She was engaged to a Mr. Minnoch, in the firm of Messrs. Houldsworth & Co., and when she wrote to L'Angelier on March 20, she intended to tell him when he came of her intended marriage.

On the fifth day of the trial came the great sensation, the reading of the love-letters from Madeleine to L'Angelier. I shall have occasion to refer to these a little later. I do not propose to put in the whole five hundred letters but to insert a few. Here they are.

*" May 7, 1856.*

MY OWN BELOVED HUSBAND,

I trust to God you got home safe, and were not much the worse for being out. Thank you, my love, for coming so far to see your Mimi. It is truly a pleasure to see my Emile. If we did wrong last night, it must have been in the excitement of our love. I suppose we ought to have waited till we were married. Yes, beloved, I did truly love you with my soul. I was happy ; it was a pleasure to be with you. Oh, if we could have remained, never more to have parted ! Darling Emile, did I seem cold to you last night ? Darling, I love you, my own Emile. I love you with my heart and soul. Am I not your wife ? Yes, I am ; and you may rest assured, after what has passed, I cannot be the wife of any other but dear, dear Emile. No ; now it would be a sin. I shall always remember last night. I dread next winter. I shall write dear Mary<sup>1</sup> soon. What would she say if she knew we were so intimate ? She would lose all her good opinion of us both, would she not ? ”

On June 14 she wrote,

“ MY DEAREST EMILE,

I shall keep your letter, and press it to my bosom. My fond Emile, are you well ? I am longing so to see you, my sweet pet, to kiss and pet you. Oh, for the day when I can do so at any time ! I fear we shall spoil each other when we are married, we shall love each other so. How we shall enjoy that time

<sup>1</sup> N.B. Miss Perry. (A. L.)

when we have no one to disturb us in your little room."

In the course of a very warm and affectionate letter, dated July 15, she said,

"Our intimacy has not been criminal, as I am your wife before God—so it has been no sin our loving each other. No, darling, fond Emile, I am your wife."

Writing in the same month, she refers to Mr. Minnoch thus:

"Minnoch left this morning. Say nothing to him in passing. It will only give him cause to say you did not behave in a gentlemanly manner. Do not do it. He said nothing to me out of place, but I was not a moment with him by myself. I do not wish to be alone with him."

It is clear that about this period L'Angelier was growing very jealous of Minnoch, and talking of leaving Scotland, for on August 11 she writes:

"Your visit of last night is over. I longed for it. How fast it passed! It looked but a few minutes ere you left me. You did look cross at first, but, thank heaven! you looked yourself ere you left—your old smile. Dear, fond Emile, I love you more and more. Emile, I know you will not go far away from me. I am your wife. You cannot leave me for ever, could you, Emile? I spoke in jest of your going last night, for I do not think you will go very far away from me, Emile, your wife. Would you leave me to end my

days in misery? For I can never be the wife of another after our intimacy."

L'Angelier seems to have sent her a picture that offended her, for in a subsequent letter she observes :

"I forgive you freely from my heart for that picture ; never do the same thing again."

And in the same letter the passage occurs :

"I did tell you at one time that I did not like Minnoch, but he was so pleasant that he quite raised himself in my estimation."

And, referring to the same gentleman, on September 29, she says :

"Mr. Minnoch has been here since Friday. He is most agreeable. I think we shall see him very often this winter. He says we shall ; and papa being so fond of him, I am sure he will ask him in often."

Some very affectionate passages occur in a letter dated January 23, 1857 :

"A kiss, my pet, my own sweet one, my beloved little pet husband. . . . Emile, my own beloved, you have just left me. Oh, sweet darling, at this moment my heart and soul burns with love for thee, my husband, my own sweet one. Emile, what would I not give at this moment to be your fond wife? Emile, I adore you. I love you with my heart and soul. I do vex and annoy you, but oh, sweet love, I do fondly,

truly love you with my soul, to be your wife, your own sweet wife."

But ere another month had passed a coolness had set in. The green-eyed monster was committing his ravages with Emile. What he wrote to her must ever remain a mystery, as only one of his many letters was produced at the trial. But some time in February 1857, she writes to him :

"I felt truly astonished to have my last letter returned to me, but it will be the last you shall have an opportunity of returning me. When you are not pleased with the letters I send you, then our correspondence shall be at an end, and, as there is coolness on both sides, our engagement had better be broken. This may astonish you, but you have more than once returned me my letters, and my mind was made up that I should not stand the same thing again. And you also annoyed me much on Saturday by your conduct in coming so near me ; altogether, I think, owing to coolness and indifference (nothing else), that we had better for the future consider ourselves strangers. I trust to your honour as a gentleman that you will not reveal anything that may have passed between us. I shall feel obliged by your bringing me my letters and likeness on Thursday evening, at seven. Be at the same gate, and C. H.<sup>1</sup> will take the parcel from you. On Friday night I shall send you all your letters, likeness, etc. I trust that you may yet be happy, and get one more worthy of you than I. On Thursday, at seven. I am, etc., M."

<sup>1</sup> Christine Haggart. (A. L.)

"You may be astonished at this sudden change, but for some time back you must have noticed a coolness in my notes. My love for you has ceased, and that is why I was cool. I did once love you truly and fondly, but for some time back I have lost much of that love. There is no other reason for my conduct, and I think it but fair to let you know this. I might have gone on and become your wife, but I could not have loved you as I ought. My conduct you will condemn, but I did at one time love you with heart and soul. It has cost me much to tell you this—sleepless nights—but it was necessary you should know. If you remain in Glasgow, or go away, I hope you may succeed in all your endeavours. I know you will never injure the character of one you so fondly loved. No, Emile, I know you have honour, and are a gentleman. What has passed you will not mention. I know when I ask you that you will comply. Adieu."

It will be seen from the above she was moving heaven and earth to recover the damning letters she had written to L'Angelier. He, on his part, had refused to give them up. He told more than one witness who was called at the trial that he would give them only to her father, and he had no doubt told Madeleine the same in one of his letters, for, some time about the 10th or 12th of February, she writes him this passionate appeal, which speaks volumes for itself,

"Emile, no one can know the intense agony of mind I have suffered last night and to-day. Emile, my father's wrath will kill me—you little know his



temper. Emile, for the love you once had for me, do not denounce me to my P. Emile, if he should read my letters to you, he will put me from him—he will hate me as a guilty wretch. I loved you and wrote to you in my first ardent love—it was with my deepest love I loved you. It was for your love I adored you. I put on paper what I should not. I was free because I loved you with my heart. If he or any other one saw those fond letters to you, what would not be said of me? On my bended knees I write you and ask you, as you hope for mercy on the judgment day, do not inform on me, do not make me a public shame. Emile, my life has been one of bitter disappointment. You, and only you, can make the rest of my life peaceful. My own conscience will be a punishment that I shall carry to my grave. I have deceived the best of men. You may forgive me, but God never will. For God's love forgive me, and betray me not. For the love you once had to me, do not bring down my father's wrath on me. It will kill my mother (who is not well). It will for ever cause me bitter unhappiness. I am humble before you, and crave your mercy. You can give me forgiveness, and you, oh, you only, can make me happy for the rest of my life. I would not ask you to love me, or ever make me your wife. I am too guilty for that. I have deceived and told too many falsehoods for you ever to respect me. But, oh! will you not keep my secret from the world? Oh! will you not, for Christ's sake, denounce me? I shall be undone! I shall be ruined! Who would trust me? Shame would be my lot. Despise me, hate me, but make me

not the public scandal. Forget me for ever. Blot out all remembrance of me. . . . I did love you, and it was my soul's ambition to be your wife. I asked you to tell me my faults. You did so, and it made me cool towards you, gradually. When you have found fault with me, I have cooled. It was not love for another, for there is no one I love. My love has all been given to you. My heart is empty, cold ; I am unloved, I am despised. I told you I had ceased to love you—it was true. I did not love as I did ; but oh, till the time of our coming to town I loved you fondly. I longed to be your wife. I had fixed February. I longed for it. The time I could not leave my father's house I grew discontented. Then I ceased to love you. Oh, Emile ! this is indeed the true statement. Now you can know my state of mind. Emile, I have suffered much for you. I lost much of my father's confidence since that September ; and my mother has never, been the same to me. No she has never given me the same kind look. For the sake of my mother, her who gave me life, spare me from shame. Oh, Emile, will you, in God's name, hear my prayer ? I ask God to forgive me. I have prayed that He might put it in your heart to spare me from shame. Never, never while I live can I be happy. No, no ; I shall always have the thought I deceived you. I am guilty ; it will be a punishment I shall bear till the day of my death. I am humbled thus to crave your pardon. But I *dare* not. While I have breath I shall ever think of you as my best friend, if you will only keep this between ourselves. I blush to ask you. Yet, Emile, will you not grant

me this my last favour? If you will never reveal what has passed. Oh, for God's sake, for the love of heaven, hear me. I grow mad. I have been ill, very ill, all day. I have had what has given me a false spirit. I had resort to what I should not have taken, but my brain is on fire. I feel as if death would indeed be sweet. Denounce me not. Emile, Emile, think of our once happy days. Pardon me if you can. Pray for me as the most wretched, guilty, miserable creature on the earth. I could stand anything but my father's hot displeasure. Emile, you will not cause my death. If he is to get your letters, I cannot see him any more; and my poor mother, I will never more kiss her. It would be a shame to them all. Emile, will you not spare me this? 'Hate me, despise me, but do not expose me. I cannot write more. I am too ill to-night.'

Other letters followed\* in the course of March, couched in the same old loving terms as before, if possible more passionate and affectionate than ever. The last was that found on the dead man's body, and already printed. As I have already said, only one of his was produced. It was dated March 5, and began, "My dear sweet pet Mimi," and related principally to her rumoured engagement with Mr. Minnoch. In it he writes:

"Answer me this—Mimi. Who gave you the trinket you showed me? Is it true that it was Mr. Minnoch? And is it true that you are directly, or indirectly, engaged to Mr. Minnoch, or to anyone else but me? These questions I must know."

Now these are only a selection of the letters, and they do not convey the details that are to be found in some I have not quoted. In those nothing is left to the imagination at all, all the intimacies of the sexual act are fully described. And that great lawyer, Lord Dunedin, tells a most amusing story apropos of these amazing letters. I leave it to the reader to decide if there could be a greater instance of our national British characteristic—hypocrisy—than this.

These letters were all kept temporarily in the hands of a certain Court official, a clerk of some denomination or other. He was an opportunist. Now was his chance to make his pile and enjoy *otium cum dignitate*. He caused it to be known that “it was a pound a read.” Yes, for just one modest sovereign anyone could peruse these wonderful effusions. No bowdlerising. Just as they were penned. That clerk knew his fellow-Britisher. Affluence poured in upon him. Of course, this state of things could not continue indefinitely, and his superiors were for some time at a loss to discover how their subordinate had acquired his prosperity. Somehow or other they eventually found out the truth, and the clerk was summarily dismissed. But not before he had nested sufficiently to retire permanently from work, and had it been in existence then, he would have been independent of the dole.<sup>1</sup>

In his address to the jury for the prosecution, the Lord Advocate, after he had digested the contents

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dunedin has since informed me that the clerk was prosecuted and convicted, consequently the enjoyment of his prosperity was postponed. (A. L.)

of these epistles, stigmatised them as being "almost incredible evidences of disgrace, of sin, of degradation, and of social depravity."

The letters clearly showed too that Madeleine was tired of L'Angelier and was clearly alive to the worldly advantages of an alliance with Mr. Minnoch.

It is always told that Mr. John Inglis (the Dean of Faculty) was aware that the Lord Justice Clerk admired a comely ankle, and so he instructed his client to sit sideways and display it. But in a picture of the trial that I have seen it must have been difficult to show an ankle, comely or otherwise. From left to right in the dock are a top-hatted constable, a wardress, Madeleine, and another top-hatted policeman. But there *are* bars in front of the dock, so perhaps the judge was not disappointed after all.

L'Angelier left behind him a most damaging pocket-book. It contained entries of appointments with Madeleine. But her counsel successfully appealed against this being put in as evidence. It was touch and go—the Lord Justice Clerk and Lord Hardyside held that it was inadmissible. Lord Ivory held that it was admissible. The Lord Justice Clerk pointed out that a man might have threatened another and in order to revenge himself upon him he might make all sorts of entries against him in a diary.

Lord Hardyside said that even had L'Angelier been alive the diary could not be accepted as evidence *of anything*. It might have been used in the witness-box to assist his memory.

But had that pocket-book been used as evidence, then I think nothing could have saved Madeleine Smith.

Miss Tennyson Jesse says, and I agree with her, that had Madeleine Smith been put in the witness-box (not permissible in 1857) she could not have explained her last letter.

The Lord Justice Clerk summed up in the panel's favour. The judge held that (1) there was no evidence to prove that Madeleine Smith had ever actually administered arsenic to L'Angelier; (2) there was no evidence to prove that L'Angelier had ever gone to 7 Blythswood Square on the night of March 22.

The jury were only absent half an hour. Yet I cannot help thinking that Madeleine Smith's suspense must have been well-nigh unendurable. Half an hour suggests Guilty or Not Guilty. The verdict was Not Proven. Tumultuous cheering broke out and in Edinburgh Madeleine became a popular idol. But in Glasgow it was not so, and she left Edinburgh for Rowaleyn furtively. A few days later she wrote to Miss Aitken, the matron of the prison at Edinburgh, a long personal letter which for sheer callousness would be hard to beat. She tilts at the verdict and talks of the many offers of marriage she has received. Mr. Minnoch is dismissed from her life, and she expresses indifference to his having been ill.

I think I am right in saying that Madeleine Smith married shortly afterwards and repaired with her husband to Australia. I fancy that she died only comparatively recently. At the time of the trial she

was twenty-one. L'Angelier was exactly ten years her senior.

Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes evidently is of my opinion about the departure to the Antipodes, for if she does not consign Letty Lynton to Australia, she packs her off to New Zealand.

## II

### GREAT CORAM STREET

PEACE on earth and goodwill towards men signifies a species of truce—an armistice of at least forty-eight hours in dealing with those we dislike—an unarmed—not an armed—neutrality for the time being, therefore when we hear of a fellow-creature being done to death on the day of all the year we experience a greater shock than if a murder had been committed at any other season. When Thomas Hood wrote his wonderful *Song of the Shirt* he intimated that the unfortunate class had nothing to hope for in this world, and that the sooner they were out of it the better for them, and perhaps, poor creatures, this is a true presentment of their lot. But the law takes every bit as much pains in trying to bring to justice the assassin who has killed one of this class, as it would in seeking to discover the murderer of one higher placed in the social scale. Witness the strenuous efforts made by the authorities to catch the Whitechapel murderer. And so in this case, although it was only “one more unfortunate gone to her rest,” the police put forth every effort to trace the woman-slayer. But the result in 1872 was failure, as of course it was in the series of crimes committed sixteen years later.



Most of us have read Defoe and his wonderful description of the Great Storm of 1703,<sup>1</sup> where on a journey through the country immediately afterwards he found trees lying by the wayside during the whole route. It is dealt with also in the opening of Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*. But one was always told that the storm of the middle of December 1872 was a very fair imitation of that of 1703. I was only a child in the later visitation, but events do plant themselves in the memory at a very early age.

On Christmas morning of 1872, when all traces of rude Boreas had disappeared, a girl named Clara Burton was brutally murdered in Great Coram Street. This street as everybody knows is named after that golden-hearted sailor who was the originator of the Foundling Hospital, and after whom is named Tattycoram (Harriet Beadle) in *Little Dorrit*. Clara Burton was twenty-seven years of age, and a frequenter of the resorts of the half-world, which in those days were openly recognised. Cremorne, The Argyle Rooms, and latterly Evans's were the most popular. I say "latterly" in regard to "Evans's" because formerly women were not allowed on the ground-floor, but were kept upstairs behind a grille, much as was the case in the House of Commons. In its respectable days under Paddy Green, Evans's was a delight. Wonderful glee-singers, and for supper such steaks and baked potatoes as London has never seen since. The baked potatoes were served in little wooden bowls and the waiters had a peculiar knack of

<sup>1</sup> In London alone the damage was estimated at £2,000,000. (A. L.)

squeezing every inch of the luscious vegetable into the bowl. But from the moment that the grille was done away with, and the *demi-mondaines* were allowed downstairs, the place was ruined. It was on the site in Covent Garden that Goldberg (Shifter of *The Sporting Times*) in after years founded the National Sporting Club.

Among the habituées of such resorts was Clara Burton, and on Christmas Eve, 1872, she sallied forth as usual in order to ply the hideous traffic. One would have thought that such an evening would have been a blank as far as her repellent errand was concerned, but it was subsequently shown that this was not her lot, for she returned to the house shortly after midnight, and after an absence of some two hours, with a man who, according to the landlady, was a German. She brought with her too a bag of fruit, to which I shall have occasion to refer shortly. Clara Burton retired upstairs to her room with her companion, and later in the morning he was heard to descend the stairs and leave the house in the ordinary way. It was then between six and seven o'clock. As usual with those sort of women who turn night into day, they are very late risers and do not breakfast until most people are thinking of lunch. So in this case, but when the hours went by and the girl did not ring, the people of the house went up and knocked at the door. There was no response. Accordingly it was decided to break open the door, and Christmas Day can never have presented a more awful spectacle. Clara Burton had evidently been dead for hours, as the blood on the bed was all coagulated. The medical

examination showed that the throat had been cut twice with a small pocket-knife or a penknife, and the detectives discovered that this same penknife had been subsequently cleaned on a towel hanging upon the horse. On the girl's face was the imprint of a left hand as though the victim had been held down while the right hand was engaged upon its awful work. One curious feature was remarked. The door was locked from outside, and there was no key.

It was not a difficult matter for the police to trace the latest movements of a girl like Clara Burton. All the recognised members of the *demi-monde* were known to them, and it was an easy matter to discover which haunt the girl had favoured on Christmas Eve. She had patronised the lounge of the Alhambra, and while there was remarked to have picked up with a foreign-looking man whose description was furnished to the police very accurately, and each description tallied. Incidentally, Clara Burton's real name was Harriet Boswell.

The motive of the murder was not clear. Robbery would appear to have been out of the question, for there was not ten shillings' worth of personal property in the room. It may have been a sadic murder, or a precursor of the Whitechapel murders, when the slayer thinks that he has a mission to kill as many women as he can. It was proved by the landlady that the stranger must have given his victim at least half a sovereign, as when she arrived with him she handed the gold coin to the landlady as part payment of her rent. Meanwhile there was a hue and cry for

the foreign-looking man and exhaustive efforts were made to check vessels of other countries that had arrived at our ports about Christmas time. As a result of these enquiries, the police paid special attention to Ramsgate of all places. They found out that a German emigrant ship named the *Wangerland* had put into the popular Kentish watering-place a few days before the tragedy. Four people from this ship travelled up to London three days before Christmas, and the detectives not only traced who they were, but the time of the train they travelled by. There was a Mr. Hermer, the owner of the vessel, the chaplain—Mr. Hassel—and his wife, and the ship's doctor, by name Carl Whollebe. On January 4 the last-named returned to the hotel at Ramsgate where he had been staying before his journey to London. His subsequent conduct aroused suspicion, as well it might, for he directed that his luggage should be sent straight on board the ship, whereas he returned himself to the hotel, and it was afterwards discovered that he left the hotel very early in the morning, before anybody else was astir, and returned to the *Wangerland*. Then the police decided to arrest the doctor, and he was confronted with two witnesses. One was the greengrocer from whom Clara Burton had purchased the fruit, and the other was a waiter from the Alhambra who had waited on the murdered woman and her companion on the fatal night. But here the police had a nasty set-back, for both the fruiterer and the waiter not only failed to recognise Whollebe, but they both swore positively that he was not the man who had been in the dead woman's company. But if they

were both certain about this they were equally certain that Mr. Hassel—the chaplain—was the wanted man. They espied him on the deck and both cried out simultaneously that it was he. Whereupon Mr. Hassel was arrested and conveyed to London.

Mr. Vaughan was then at Bow Street, and on January 20 Hassel appeared before him. A waiter from that Bohemian resort—the Hotel Cavour—next door to the Alhambra—proved a third witness against Hassel. He swore that the chaplain and Clara Burton had supped together there on Christmas Eve. Mr. Vaughan had remanded the accused for a week until January 27. On January 29 other witnesses identified the chaplain, but now others came forward who failed to do so. Then one of the maidservants at the Ramsgate hotel deposed that on December 28 or 29, Mr. Hassel asked for a clothes-brush and a bottle of turpentine, of which latter he used up nearly all. But the prosecution urged that far more damning still was the fact that among the laundry sent to the wash by the chaplain were some half-dozen handkerchiefs very much blood-stained. But against this the doctor (Whollebe) swore that on Christmas Eve the party had returned to Ramsgate from London, and that from January 1 to January 4 they had again visited the Metropolis. Therefore, if all four were in a Ramsgate hotel on Christmas Eve the police must look elsewhere for the murderer of Clara Burton. In face of this alibi it is small wonder that Mr. Vaughan discharged the prisoner, declaring that he left the Court without a stain upon his

character.<sup>1</sup> And to this day the brutal murder at 12 Great Coram Street remains an unsolved mystery.

I feel it incumbent upon me to make one observation, and that is about the blood-stained handkerchiefs. So far am I from agreeing with the prosecution that they were damning evidence of the accused's guilt—that to me it is proof positive of his complete innocence. No man who had murdered a woman would send articles deeply stained with her blood to a laundry, and shortly after the crime too. He would, as a matter of fact, have burnt the handkerchiefs.

Undiscovered murders were far less frequent than they are to-day. In these times they are alarmingly commonplace. And it is a curious fact that with the advance of scientific resources, wireless, etc., the crook has adapted himself better to these progressive inventions than have his would-be captors. That is to say there are far more undetected murderers at large now than there were fifty years ago. Spider, the immaculate white kid-gloved burglar and murderer of 1887, as portrayed on the stage so realistically by the late Mr. E. W. Willard, is to-day a hostile power to be reckoned with in modern life. So is Raffles. But he is a less alarming type of criminal.

I mentioned early in this sketch that I should have occasion to refer again to the fruit purchased by the unfortunate Clara Burton. When the murder was discovered some of the apples and nuts had been eaten, but there was one apple only half eaten, and the victim's teeth were imprinted on the fruit. To

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister, wrote him an autograph letter of apology. (A. L.)

show how thorough were the methods of the police, a plaster cast of the apple and the indentations was made, and it is to be seen to this day at Scotland Yard.

There is generally an instance of innocence suffering in connection with these cases. Clara Burton left an illegitimate child, and the father was most probably a former protector who at regular intervals remitted money to her. The police did not fail to look into *his* movements, but as he was at the other end of the world his alibi was proved to be even clearer than that of Mr. Hassel, the chaplain of the German emigrant-ship, *Wangerland*.

### III

#### THE BALHAM MYSTERY

**W**HEN one travels on what was known until quite recently as the London and Brighton Railway all lines lead to Balham. But immediately after passing that station one set of lines continues straight on into the suburbs, the other switches off sharply to the right and skirting Tooting Bec Common proceeds as far as all the Sussex, and some of the Hampshire, coast resorts. It is exactly on the left where this bifurcation commences that there stood in its own grounds that charming white house yclept The Priory. Now no trace of it remains. But a few yards further on there still stands the Bedford Hotel, where one of the most famous inquests in this country was held. For years and years I never failed to look out of the carriage window at Balham when passing these two objects of note, and even now that brick and mortar have usurped the place of the rural beauty of The Priory, I still never fail to gaze with interest at the Bedford Hotel. The impressions of childhood are so interwoven as regards the Balham Mystery for one thing, and for another no poison drama of my time has had quite the same setting. The social position of the principal personages connected with it was far superior to that



of the prime characters in any other poisoning case of the last fifty or sixty years. There is a Medicean or Borgiasque whiff in the atmosphere of the whole affair. And as regards myself there were many interesting links, as I will mention. Then, even in these drab times, any one of us with any artistic sense takes pleasure in contemplating physical beauty in either sex, and in Dr. Gully and in Mrs. Bravo we see this gift to a marked degree; in fact, in the case of the former the looks were phenomenal.

Mrs. Bravo was the widow of Captain Ricardo of the Grenadiers. *Née* Florence Campbell, she was the daughter of rich parents. She was married at nineteen years of age, and she and her husband were an unusually handsome couple. But what appeared so promising a union proved disastrous. The pair separated in 1869 and Ricardo died in 1870 on the Continent, leaving everything to his wife. Now, prior to her widowhood, Mrs. Ricardo had become acquainted with Dr. Gully, who was the fashionable physician at Malvern, and on Ricardo's demise Gully quitted the exquisite Worcestershire watering-place and settled at Balham. Very shortly afterwards the rich and beautiful widow acquired The Priory, situated some quarter of a mile from Dr. Gully's house. I often asked my father, who was in the Brigade with Ricardo, about the latter, but I never could extract anything from him, although of other characters in the drama he would discourse freely. But a lady of my acquaintance, a relative of the Campbells, has in her possession Mrs. Ricardo's diary, which she very kindly lent to me. It is sad reading. But the impression I

formed was that there was no intrigue between her and Dr. Gully in her first husband's lifetime, whatever may have occurred later. Her family, however—the Campbells—were continually pressing her to cease the acquaintance and think of her reputation, but this Mrs. Ricardo declined to do; but as widows living alone when good-looking are always in an equivocal position, she engaged a companion, who was also to act as housekeeper, at a salary of £100 a year and the run of her teeth. Even in those happy far-off days a large salary! The name of this fortunate lady was Mrs. Cox, but from the moment she entered the house she was never a dependant, and took her meals with her mistress, and this arrangement continued after Mrs. Ricardo's second marriage, and the two women always addressed each other by their Christian names (Jane and Florence).

Evidence is very conflicting as to the exact time when Mrs. Ricardo informed Gully that their friendship must come to an end. It was either just before or just after Mrs. Ricardo met young Bravo. The point is overwhelmingly important. Mrs. Ricardo was introduced by Mrs. Cox to the Bravos, Joseph and his wife. Both Mrs. Cox and Joseph Bravo had financial interests in the West Indies, and Joseph had a stepson, Charles Bravo, and who was at this period of our story a rising young barrister. Charles fell in love with Mrs. Ricardo at first sight, and it was evident that the lady on her side was not indifferent. It was, too, another instance of money goes to money, as the Bravos were very well off, and Mrs. Ricardo had in her own right £5000 a year, a large sum for a woman

partook of that meal in the St. James's Hall as the guest of Mrs. Bravo's uncle, Mr. Ord. Mr. Bravo returned to The Priory by train about four o'clock. I mention no names but here I digress. One of our members, who perhaps was also the best-known member of Upper Bohemia of that day, used to tell us that he alone knew who killed Mr. Bravo, but that was all we could ever get out of him, so that his information was not very helpful, except that he added that it was neither Mrs. Bravo nor Mrs. Cox. He then used to say that he had spent that Easter with the Bravos and had left the house just before Bravo went for his famous ride on Tooting Common on the Tuesday (April 18). But there are discrepancies in this tantalising narrative, because it is beyond doubt that the Bravos drove up to town in the morning, and there is no mention of our friend being in the house when husband and wife met again about four in the afternoon.

*Let us follow carefully what then transpired.* Mrs. Bravo presented Charles with some tobacco that she had purchased at the Haymarket Stores that morning, and he repaired to the garden to try it. She was astonished, however, when he shortly reappeared in riding kit and announced his intention of going for a canter. Charles was fond of horses, but was not a particularly good rider, and when he returned shortly after six o'clock he seemed jaded, and explained his appearance as being due to his horse having twice bolted with him.

Dinner was at the early hour (for people in that position) of 7.30 p.m. On this occasion it was a few



MRS. CHARLES BRAVO



minutes late as Mrs. Cox had only just returned from her day's business at the seaside. Not for exactly twelve days had Mrs. Bravo been at the evening meal, but owing to her indisposition had taken dinner upstairs. It is therefore to be presumed that between April 6 and April 17 inclusive, Mr. Bravo and Mrs. Cox had dined *tête-à-tête*. To-night all three were present. Let us see what the position is again. Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Bravo are to go to the seaside for a month, but it has been broken to Mrs. Cox that her engagement as companion to Mrs. Bravo cannot continue indefinitely. She is *de trop*. And yet Mrs. Cox was primarily responsible for introducing Mrs. Ricardo (as she then was) to the Bravo family.

Charles Bravo himself is said to have been of a retiring disposition, with only a small circle of friends in The Temple, and to have been rather fond of the bawbees. At any rate, even as a small boy it struck me that for a couple who possessed some £7000 a year between them the board was not suggestive of gluttony. The fatal dinner consisted of whiting, roast lamb, and a savoury made of eggs and bloaters' paste. Mr. Bravo drank three glasses of burgundy. The butler afterwards swore that the two ladies disposed of the major part of two bottles of sherry. The three only remained some half-hour after dinner, when, in view of her recent illness, Bravo packed his wife off to bed. Bravo himself came up to bed at half-past nine. He was a man who usually kept very early hours. Meanwhile a housemaid, who had been attending on Mrs. Bravo, left her bedroom in order to tidy up the dressing-room, and on her returning some

ten minutes later to the bedroom she found that Mrs. Bravo was already asleep, and that Mrs. Cox was seated by the bedside fully dressed. Mrs. Cox then proceeded to inform her that she need not wait any longer and that she could take the dogs, and put them to bed as usual downstairs. But she and the dogs were only half-way down when the door of Mr. Bravo's room was burst open and the occupant darted out, shouting, "Florence, Florence, hot water, hot water!" The maid, whose name was Mary Anne Kleeber, at once tore back towards Mrs. Bravo's room. Mrs. Cox's room adjoined Mr. Bravo's, but it was not until Mary Anne opened her door and shouted out to her what was the matter that Mrs. Cox appeared. Followed by the servant, Mrs. Cox entered Charles's room to find the stricken man vomiting freely out of the window, and between the retchings calling for hot water. Mrs. Cox despatched the servant for the hot water, and when it was brought Mary Anne saw Mrs. Cox rubbing Mr. Bravo's chest, he having collapsed on the floor. Mrs. Cox at once prescribed mustard, camphor, and hot coffee as an emetic, and despatched the butler, by name Rowe—to tell the coachman to fetch Dr. Harrison at once. Mary Anne, in procuring the remedies prescribed by Mrs. Cox, had to enter Mrs. Bravo's bedroom, where the medicine-chest was kept, and she found that, like the lady in *The Ghost Train*, Mrs. Bravo had slept peacefully through everything. Mary Anne herself awoke her mistress and in a trice all three women were in Charles's room, but when she learnt that Dr. Harrison had been sent for Mrs. Bravo hurried downstairs and told

Rowe to fetch Dr. Moore, who lived only a few hundred yards away. In very few minutes Dr. Moore was on the scene, and hardly had he put Bravo to bed when Dr. Harrison arrived from Streatham.

I remember once a Continental physician telling me that abroad they thought it so strange that our doctors entered into partnership, as he expressed it, "just like a firm of solicitors." Well, it was in that same year (1876) that my father acquired a place at Streatham, and it is hard to believe that it was so. For in those days Streatham was more like the Streatham of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale. There were many places standing surrounded with acres and acres of grounds. To-day brick and mortar only is to be seen, and in fact Streatham Common is the first open space that one comes to in that neighbourhood. But in 1876 when it was all countryfied there were three doctors in partnership, Ord, Harrison, and Burgess. Burgess was our own doctor. Ord we knew well. He was a member of the old Northumbrian family, and I take it a relative of Mrs. Charles Bravo's uncle already referred to. Harrison I never met, but I knew him extremely well by sight. It was not until many years later that I knew what an important part he played in this drama. I can recall his physiognomy perfectly now.

Upon the fateful evening when Dr. Harrison arrived at The Priory, Mrs. Cox had a word first with him about the vomiting, expressing her opinion that Bravo had taken chloroform. To Dr. Moore upon arrival Mrs. Cox had made no remark whatever. When the two doctors met upstairs they compared



notes. A bottle of chloroform was found in the room, but it was explained that Bravo had been in the habit of rubbing his gums with that drug in order to alleviate neuralgia, and neither Dr. Moore nor Dr. Harrison could detect the odour in the patient's breath, which would be the case had he swallowed it. Then the two doctors having injected brandy and water as a stimulant asked for further medical advice. Mrs. Bravo at once readily assented and despatched a note by the coachman to Mr. Royes Bell, a cousin and a Harley Street surgeon, asking him to come at once and bring a doctor with him. At two o'clock in the morning Mr. Royes Bell and Dr. Johnson of Savile Row arrived. But practically coincident with their appearance alarming symptoms developed in the sick man, the vomiting recommenced with added intensity and blood emanated from him. In fact, the new arrivals were greeted by Drs. Moore and Harrison with the news that the trouble was an irritant poison, of which there could be no doubt. Dr. Johnson at once declared that even if Bravo had swallowed laudanum or chloroform accidentally no such result as this would obtain, and he pressed Bravo to know if he had taken any other poison. The wretched man insisted that he had taken no poison. It was then that Mrs. Cox, taking Bell aside, informed him that Bravo had confided to her that he had poisoned himself, but had begged her not to tell his wife. Bell at once passed this on to Dr. Johnson and he at once recommenced urging Bravo to give the name of the poison. Bravo, suffering terribly, again swore that he had taken no poison intentionally. Dr.

Harrison then tackled Mrs. Cox as to why Dr. Moore and he had not been told all this before. Mrs. Cox replied that she had told him immediately he had arrived at The Priory. To which Dr. Harrison answered, "All you told me was that he had taken chloroform." At five in the morning the three doctors returned home, leaving the cousin (the surgeon Bell) in the house. But Dr. Johnson (afterwards Sir George Johnson) first of all collected the vomit from the leads of the house, a simple matter, sealed it in a jar and took it back with him to town for analysis, as he suspected arsenic to be the fell agent at work. At midday, feeling better, Bravo made his will. As in Dendy Sadler's picture, the tenor was "Everything to my wife." That afternoon all three doctors looked in at various times, and again Bravo was asked to tell all he knew. This time the sick man turned on his questioners and upbraided them for persecuting him "when he had told them all he knew." By now Bravo's family had all arrived in response to urgent messages. At nine o'clock on Thursday morning Dr. Johnson arrived with the result of the analysis. The test for arsenic had failed. But he found the patient somewhat worse. He returned again at 3 p.m. and brought with him Dr. Henry Smith, a brother-in-law of Mr. Joseph Bravo. We now have four doctors and a surgeon. But even then Mrs. Bravo (Mrs. Charles) secretly despatched a note by Mrs. Cox to that great man, Sir William Gull, who five years previously had saved King Edward VII's (as he was afterwards) life when in the clutches of typhoid. Incidentally, Sir William probably made more money

than anybody in medicine, either at that time or afterwards. In addition to landed estates he left £344,000, and this was not taken from his heirs at his death, as would be the case nowadays.

Sir William and Dr. Johnson came to the sick-house together, though of course it was a fearful solecism on Mrs. Bravo's part to call him in without first informing those already in attendance. Sir William at a glance saw two things. Firstly, that Bravo was suffering from an irritant poison, and secondly that he was beyond human aid. However, he remained in the house forty minutes, during which he impressed on the dying man the duty to tell how he had been poisoned, adding these solemn words, "If you die without telling us the truth, someone will be accused or suspected of having poisoned you." But again, "As I am about to appear before my Maker," Charles Bravo affirmed that he had wilfully swallowed no poison, and if he had done so accidentally it was either chloroform or laudanum. "You are suffering from the effects of neither," asserted Sir William gravely.

Charles Bravo passed away at 4 a.m. on Friday, April 21.

In all the circumstances a death certificate was impossible and therefore the coroner was asked to arrange for an inquest and hold a post-mortem. This latter was performed by Dr. Joseph Payne, and Drs. Johnson, Harrison, and Moore, and also Mr. Royes Bell, were all present when it took place. Various portions of the organs of the deceased were then

forwarded to Professor Redwood for analysis, and at the direction of Sir William Gull so was further matter associated with the dead man that I will leave to the imagination.

The first inquest was held in the dining-room of The Priory. The coroner for East Surrey, Mr. Carter, had been informed by Mrs. Cox that that was Mrs. Charles Bravo's wish, and it seems that he was led to believe it to be a case of suicide. And in order to spare the feelings of the family the Press were excluded, and but for the presence of a barrister—by name Reid—no notes of the proceedings would have been taken at all. Mr. Reid happened to be a friend of the deceased. Mrs. Bravo was excused attendance at the inquest which opened on Tuesday, April 25. And it was through her prostration that Mrs. Cox had had to make all the preliminary arrangements, even to intimating that refreshments would be provided for the jury. Presumably it was Mrs. Cox who had prepared Mr. Carter for a case of suicide, for all through the proceedings the coroner evinced a chivalrous desire to spare the feelings of the relatives. After listening to the evidence of Mr. Joseph Bravo, Mrs. Cox, Amelia Bushell (an old and retired servant of the Bravo family and who had arrived with Mr. Royes Bell's sister before the death), and Dr. Harrison, Mr. Carter adjourned the inquest until April 28, in order to await the result of Professor Redwood's analysis. But one point was brought out during the proceedings. When the Joseph Bravos, Miss Bell and Amelia Bushell arrived ~~at~~ The Priory, on Wednesday, April 19, Mrs. Joseph Bravo and Amelia Bushell

took charge of the sick-room, and Mrs. Charles Bravo gave up her room to the Joseph Bravos, and she and Mrs. Cox slept upstairs.

Now already, on April 25, Dr. Johnson had learnt privately from Professor Redwood that no less than forty grains of antimony or tartar emetic had been discovered in the body. He communicated this to Joseph Bravo, who, on the advice of Dr. Henry Smith, his brother-in-law, notified Scotland Yard, and the matter was put in the hands of Detective-Inspector Clark. But it is only right to emphasise the fact that at that stage Joseph Bravo never suspected "murder," but wished it cleared up that his son had taken antimony accidentally and not intentionally. Accordingly, on April 28, Professor Redwood testified as to the cause of death. Forty grains is a large quantity of such a deadly poison as antimony, and the professor added that alone from the vomit collected from the leads by Dr. Johnson he had discovered ten grains. Mr. Carter, as I say, convinced that he was holding an inquest upon a suicide, now that he had learnt the exact cause of death, decided to close the inquest and he absolutely declined to hear the evidence of Dr. Johnson and Dr. Moore. Still less would he permit Mrs. Charles Bravo to be called. Lastly, he overrode the jury, one or two members of which expressed dissatisfaction at Mrs. Cox's testimony. But it must be placed on record that he did this: He sent for Mr. Joseph Bravo while the court was cleared and asked him privately if he entertained any suspicion of foul play. The father answered, "No, but there are drugs in every

room in the house." Upon that the jury brought in the following verdict, "The deceased died from the effects of poison—antimony—but there was no evidence as to the circumstances in which it had come into his body."

Charles Bravo was buried on the following day (April 29), and on the following Wednesday (May 3) his widow repaired to rooms taken for her by Mrs. Cox, at 38 Brunswick Terrace, Brighton. Apparently the furnished house scheme fell through.

Who first started the sensational rumours that without exaggeration were shortly to furnish the main topic of conversation under every roof, high and low, throughout the country? According to Sir John Hall, it was a barrister named Willoughby, who on the day following the funeral went to Scotland Yard and drew their attention to certain facts. Like the other barrister (Reid) Willoughby was a friend of Charles Bravo. Up to then Scotland Yard, in the person of Inspector Clark, like Mr. Carter, had regarded the death as a case of suicide. But on May 9 readers of the *World* had their appetites whetted. An article appeared entitled "A Tragedy?" No names were mentioned. But that was the first reference to any mystery that appeared in print. But on the following day the *Daily Telegraph* went one better, and not only repeated all that the *World* had printed, but gave all the names, and from that moment that paper never rested until a second inquest was opened. The *Daily Telegraph* has always been a favourite newspaper for correspondents, and in fact it

has always been the favourite organ for ventilation of the views of the individual. As notices of meetings have it, "All are Welcome," Did not "Lottie, aged six," state her views on "Is Marriage a Failure?" in that publication? She cast her vote for the blessed state, "as her papa and mamma were so happy." Imagine then the theories on this case that bombarded Sir Edward Lawson (as he then was). The burgundy got the largest number of votes as to what was the liquid that had been mixed with the antimony. Drs. Moore and Harrison were the prize contributors, as both wrote to the paper, and the *Lancet* obtained "a scoop," for Dr. Johnson was responsible for a leader in that publication detailing the medical aspect of the question. Meanwhile the widow was receiving appalling anonymous letters, and upon the advice of her father—Mr. Campbell—offering a reward of £500 for anyone who could prove the purchase of the poison or throw a light on her husband's decease. Then, on May 18, Sir John Simon's father, Mr. Sergeant Simon, raised the question of the conduct of the inquest in the House. The Home Secretary<sup>1</sup> frankly admitted that there was grave cause for complaint. In fact, unknown to Mr. Simon he had instructed Mr. Stevenson to hold a private inquiry. As a result two days were spent in turning The Priory inside out, but nothing of an incriminating nature was found. I think the law in those days must have been different from what it is to-day. Because it was then necessary first to obtain the widow's permission

<sup>1</sup> Mr., afterwards Lord Cross. He was generally credited with having always advised Queen Victoria about her investments. (A. L.)

for the search. This was readily given, but then five weeks had elapsed.

On May 27 the *Daily Telegraph* announced the enquiry closed, but drew attention to the fact that the names of Mrs. Bravo and Mrs. Cox were not among the thirty witnesses who had been examined. Whereupon, both ladies, after being cautioned by Mr. Stevenson, made statements to him. Mrs. Cox's was most important. She declared that Bravo had told her that he had committed suicide so as to leave the way clear for Gully, but had begged her "not to tell Florence." She also declared that Bravo was also twitting his wife about her relations with Gully in the past.

Mrs. Bravo swore that, attached as she was to Charles, he had an ungovernable temper and had once struck her. He was always badgering her to dismiss Mrs. Cox, by which he would save £400 a year. It appears, too, that Bravo had had a past. He had led a man's life, as Sir Arthur Pinero expresses it in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Bravo's pensioned mistress resided at Maidenhead. But Mrs. Bravo's chief complaint was that her husband's promise never to mention Gully again after her confession to him had not been fulfilled.

On June 19, Sir John Holker applied for the holding of a second inquest and the quashing of the first. After considerable argument the judges in the Court of Queen's Bench granted the application, they being Sir Alexander Cockburn, Sir John Mellor, and Mr. Justice Field. Mr. Carter opened the second inquest on July 11, in the billiard-room of the Bedford



Hotel, Balham. Few hostels can have entertained a more distinguished gathering. For Charles's mother, Sir George Lewis appeared. Seated next to him was our old member and that great criminologist, Sir Willoughby Maycock. Mr. Campbell had retained for his daughter my father's old friend, Sir Henry James (afterwards Lord James of Hereford) and Mr. Biron, Q.C. (father of Sir Chartres Biron). Mr. Murphy, Q.C., and Mr. Bray were for Mrs. Cox, and the City Solicitor, Sir Henry Kimber, was for Dr. Gully. The Solicitor-General, Sir John Gorst, was for the Crown, assisted by Sir Harry Poland, and after some days, the Attorney-General (Sir John Holker) was brought in to lead for the Crown. Mr. Burleigh Muir assisted Mr. Carter as legal assessor. A special train conveyed the Court and the seventeen jurymen to West Norwood Cemetery in order to view the body and so comply with the law. After the coffin had been disinterred a portion of the lid was sawn away and a piece of plate-glass was affixed in order to counteract the unpleasant effects. Yet, despite the fact that the inquest lasted until August 12, and witnesses were badgered and turned inside out, the verdict of the jury ultimately was "Wilful murder by the administration of tartar emetic by some person unknown." This verdict was a clear indication that the jury disbelieved Mrs. Cox's statement about the suicide, but by introducing Gully's name in the course of her evidence she supplied a motive for the murder. And despite the protests of his counsel, Sergeant Parry (briefed by Sir Henry Kimber), Sir George Lewis extracted from



SIR GILBERT GIBBY MAYCOCK, K.C.M.G.

A great commandant, who sat with Sir George Lewis throughout the siege upon Mt. Charles Peak.



Dr. Gully in the course of a terrible cross-examination the fact that he and Mrs. Bravo had been lovers, but never prior to Captain Ricardo's death, and the friendship was discontinued prior to her engagement with Charles Bravo.

Let us conclude by briefly taking the three principals in turn. To assume that Dr. Gully committed the crime is to class oneself with those foolish people who wanted to try the Kaiser for murder. He had never been inside The Priory since Mrs. Ricardo's engagement to Charles Bravo. The conclusions that brainless folk jumped to were false. The acquaintance with Mrs. Charles Bravo no longer even existed. Yet few men have been more maligned. He himself stated that at one time he was quite prepared for arrest and had retained his Counsel. The view that many people—chiefly women—took was, "Just fancy, and sixty-seven years of age too, and a married man, my dear!"

He was compelled to resign all his medical appointments.

But he had committed two grave errors of judgment. On one occasion Mrs. Cox asked him to prescribe some laurel-water for Mrs. Bravo. He could not well refuse, but he sent it to a house in Lancaster Road owned by Mrs. Cox. It can hardly be maintained seriously that this half-ounce bottle contained forty grains of tartar emetic. His second error of judgment was continuing to live at Balham after Mrs. Ricardo came to live at The Priory.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He himself declared that at 67 he was too old to move house. (A. L.)

But to show how hard slander dies, it was many years after this case that Dr. Gully's son took the Chair as Speaker of the House of Commons. This official act was greeted with shouts from some of the Irish Members of "Bravo! Gully!"

The second principal in the case is Mrs. Bravo. But without a motive you cannot have murder by poison. She was fond of Charles. She and Gully were now strangers. Suppose Charles were dead a renewal of intimate relations with Gully was out of the question, especially with a man of 67. And remember that Mrs. Ricardo was never at any time an adulteress. I believe her story and that of Dr. Gully implicitly. But women were fearfully down upon her. The extraordinary good looks of the pair prompts one to quote the Ovidian tag, *Casta quam nemo rogavit*. That probably sizes up the mentality of her plainer sisters. Then how could Mrs. Bravo have had access to tartar emetic? There were those who tried to prove that she gave it to her husband prior to his going for that last ride. They little know the impossibility of riding for two hours (with a horse bolting twice) with antimony (and forty grains of it) inside you.

It is necessary for a man of my years to explain to the younger generation how very different the social conditions were in those Victorian days than they are to-day. England has always been a country of anomalies, and always will be so, and therefore incomprehensible. In the seventies we had on the one hand no County Council and therefore none of

its regulations. That is to say, there were no closing hours; places of amusement, clubs, etc., could remain open all night. Cremorne, the Argyll Rooms, flourished as openly as any Parisian resort. There was a recognised *demi-monde*, and there were acknowledged queens of it. *Per contra* there was an almost Puritan austerity about its literature that seems hard to realise in 1931. *East Lynne* was considered a most improper book, in many homes only to be read surreptitiously. The plot of *East Lynne* is much on the lines of *The Seventh Commandment*, and that being the mental attitude towards it, one can imagine the hostility shown to Mrs. Bravo in real life. There is a close analogy between her story and the novel. About that time too that great writer, Charles Reade, wrote *A Terrible Temptation*. He was openly accused of fostering adultery. And, of course, anyone reading Ouida's novels (in public) was past praying for. The emancipation of women may have brought about a broader view, but in Mrs. Bravo's day the erring sister had a bad time of it.

Lastly we come to Mrs. Cox. If Charles Bravo remarked to her, "I have taken poison," why did she not (1) send for Dr. Moore within a stone's-throw, instead of to Dr. Harrison at Streatham? (2) Why did she not tell the doctor upon arrival that he had been called in for a poison case? And the motive in her case was a very powerful one. She had been under notice to leave. That meant giving up £100 a year and first-class quarters and living. Charles Bravo removed and she would stay on. Sir John

Hall does not make it as clear that he believed her to be guilty as one or two of his critics try to make out. In fact, he leaves us guessing as to his own views, and in private conversation I always failed to obtain a definite statement from him. On the other hand, that other great criminologist and historian—the late J. B. Atlay—was always emphatic about Mrs. Cox's guilt, and denied any "mystery." He possessed an old broadsheet of the case, and one illustration depicted the jury "waiting to taste the antimony at the second inquest." It amusingly recalled Phiz's illustration of the boys at Dotheboys Hall waiting to swallow the brimstone and treacle. Finally, the broadsheet concluded with a representation of the Devil with his tail curled round him, seated, awaiting the revelation of the mystery.

Atlay was not alone in thinking Mrs. Cox guilty. She was the cause of one of the most perfect parodies in the language :

When lovely woman stoops to folly  
And finds her husband in the way,  
What charm can soothe her melancholy ?  
What art can turn him into clay ?

The only means her aims to cover  
And save herself from prison locks  
And repossess her ancient lover  
Are Burgundy and Mrs. Cox.



MRS. COX





## IV

### THE BURTON CRESCENT MYSTERY

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I HAVE more than once mentioned the fact of 1879 being 1849's rival as the vintage year in crime. As regards the later date, to the names of Peace, Kate Webster, Hannah Dobbs, and to Catherine Churchill, we have to add that of Mary Donovan. One cannot always attribute mysterious coincidences to superstition, cold facts speak for themselves, and the following *is* curious. Some hundred years ago an elderly woman was murdered in Montagu Place, Bedford Square, and her murderer was never found. Take Montagu Place as the centre of a circle and we find an undiscovered murder at 4 Euston Square (see Hannah Dobbs), another in Harley Street (1880), and another in Great Coram Street. And if this were not enough in our radius we also find a fourth unsolved crime at 4 Burton Crescent. Hence that locality for long bore a sinister name, a murder germ seemed to be transmitted and, what is more alarming from a public point of view, the transgressors escape the vindication of the law. I had almost omitted to add to my list another undiscovered crime in that quarter of London, and that was in 1884, in the very row of houses that was the scene of the subject of this sketch.

At the time of our story there resided at 4 Burton Crescent, Mrs. Samuels, an aged widow who had turned seventy-five years of age. Mrs. Samuels lived quite alone, that is to say no servant resided on the premises, and the only assistance she received in the housework (and the houses in Burton Crescent contain a dozen rooms or more) was from a young daily help. Consequently, when anyone lives alone in such a large house one is apt to gain a reputation for two things, wealth and eccentricity—especially the former. That reputation has cost many a resident his or her life; we need look no further than the Fowler and Milsom Case, of which I treat elsewhere in this book. But in the case of Mrs. Samuels, one day she took in a lodger, a Polish musician rejoicing in the name of John Borschidski. This gentleman, however, by virtue of his calling was not usually at home before 11.30 p.m. Consequently the long winter evenings saw an aged old woman quite alone in a big house.

True to his habits, Mr. Borschidski, on the night of December 11, returned home, letting himself in as usual, and proceeded upstairs to his rooms. He occupied a bedroom and a sitting-room. He found the gas turned on in the latter, but no supper, which every night at eleven was laid out for him by Mrs. Samuels. Thinking that his landlady might have retired to bed too ill to perform her ordinary duties, Mr. Borchidski went downstairs to the basement in quest of edibles, as he was naturally very hungry, the kitchen as in most large London houses being in the basement. A terrible sight greeted him. The body

of Mrs. Samuels lay on the floor bathed in blood, the whole kitchen was like a shambles and the victim's head was all battered in. Tearing up the stairs, he darted into the street and at once found himself in the presence of a policeman on patrol, to whom he told his terrible discovery. Mr. Borschidski had resided at 4 Burton Crescent for a considerable time, and was well cognisant of Mrs. Samuel's family affairs. He was aware that she had two sons and a daughter, the latter married. One of the sons, Judah Samuels, lived quite close, and as soon as he had told his story to the policeman the Pole hurried round to break the news to Mr. Judah. The police sent for their surgeon, who made a most exhaustive examination. The poor old lady had been done to death in circumstances of unusual ferocity, probably by a hammer or a bludgeon. It was the opinion of the surgeon (Mr. Hutchinson) that the murder had taken place between eight and nine, i.e. about three hours before the musician's return. There were, however, all the evidences that, despite her great age, Mrs. Samuels had sold her life dearly; for instance, her hands were terribly mutilated. But then a thorough search of the room revealed two remarkable things. Firstly, the lace cap worn by most elderly ladies of that time was lying near the body, *but this was almost the only thing in the room that was not blood-stained*. Secondly, a block of wood studded with nails—an appalling weapon—was found broken in half. This block of wood was half of a hat-rack, but, try as the police could, the other half was not to be found.

The reconstruction of the crime was as follows. The daily help had left the house at 3 p.m. At that hour there were some workmen executing some repairs in the house, and Mrs. Samuels was left with them. In the ordinary course the men left some two hours later, as is usual with men so employed. These men departed in the ordinary way by the front door, Mrs. Samuels being then absolutely alone. Between eight and nine p.m. her assailant gained an entry to the house by leaping the area railings and breaking the glass in the pantry door. This was heard by Mrs. Samuels, who came upon the intruder, and before she could escape upstairs again and summon assistance from the front door she was felled and murdered. One of the points the police noticed was that prior to quitting the house the murderer had washed his hands at the kitchen sink, for it was all blood-bespattered. But what baffled the police, and like the murder itself has never been elucidated to this day, is the manner of the miscreant's escape, because every door in the house was locked on the inside. (The musician attested that the hall door was thus fastened when he ran for the police.) And the murderer could not have escaped by the area, even if he had been "Spring-Heeled Jack," because there were no steps, and, although he could drop *down*, there was nothing within reach that he could catch hold of in order to hoist himself up.

Of course the first motive for the crime suggested was robbery. But the family of Mrs. Samuels, who knew where their mother kept all her ready money, declared this to be intact, neither were they able to

furnish the police with a single detail of anything missing.

Then, of course, the usual amount of clues were furnished, all vague and shadowy. One was to the effect that an elderly man had been seen outside the area railings for some days past, and that after the crime he was never seen again. Neither do I personally think he ever will be.

The police then prosecuted their enquiries with a view to establishing who was acquainted with the deceased, and her movements, and more especially if Mrs. Samuels had always contented herself with a daily help, or like most people had ever had resident servants. And finding that a certain Mary Donovan had been in her employ until comparatively recently for as long a period as ten years, they turned their attention to that lady. They ascertained from the daily help, whose name was Fanny White, that in the course of the fatal Wednesday Mrs. Samuels had mentioned to her that on the previous day Mary Donovan and her sister, Kate, had paid her a visit, but that the former was the worse for drink, and Mrs. Samuels intimated that that was not an unusual condition with her, and that she had had often to reprimand her for that failing.

The police then subjected Mrs. Donovan to a searching cross-examination and told her that she had been seen to leave 4 Burton Crescent on the fateful Wednesday. (By her own admission, and by the evidence of Fanny White, she had been there on the day before as well.) Asked why she had called again on the Wednesday, she said it was to procure the

address of her sister. But it was pointed out to her that as her sister had accompanied her to the house on the Tuesday it was rather odd that she should go to Mrs. Samuels on the Wednesday in order to obtain her address. She admitted leaving the house between 8 and 8.30 p.m.; and stated that on arrival it was Mr. Borschidski who admitted her. She also stated that while she was there a man who resembled a decorator or house-painter called to see apartments, and that when she left the house the man was still with Mrs. Samuels. After taking down her statements the police decided to arrest her, and she was removed to Bow Street. Blood was discovered on the prisoner's dress, and Professor Redwood<sup>1</sup> declared this to be human. Mrs. Donovan stated that it was iron-mould. It was also shown that a pair of boots and a ring belonging to Mrs. Samuels had been offered to a pawnbroker by Mrs. Donovan, but although pawntickets on the same shop were found on Mrs. Donovan, there were no pawntickets for the boots and the ring, and the assistant who made out the tickets for the latter could not swear positively that it was Mrs. Donovan who pawned them. In view of this the Bow Street magistrate declared that there was not sufficient evidence to commit her for trial and she was discharged. The police also turned their attention to the workmen who had been in the house, but *they* easily accounted for their movements. The mysterious decorator was never traced. One curious story told by Mrs. Donovan was proved to be wholly false. She stated that on the Tuesday Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> See The Balham Mystery. (A. L.)

Samuels asked her to do a little chiropody for her, and to cut her toe-nails, and that she complied with the request. Upon examination of the corpse her toe-nails were found to be abnormally long.

No further arrest in addition to that of Mrs. Donovan was ever made. But there are one or two points that are very extraordinary in the case. How did all the doors in the house remain locked on the inside? Escape by the area was practically impossible for a man, quite so for a woman. Moreover, assuming the murderer to have gained access from the area (the glass in the pantry door was broken, and there is little doubt that that was the mode of ingress) he (or she) must have been unarmed, because Dr. Hutchinson definitely affirmed that Mrs. Samuels had been killed with the broken hat-rack. Now it is not very easy to tear off a hat-rack from a door or wall to which it may happen to have been nailed. It would require much force. It would be almost certain to break (as was the case here), and what became of the other half of it? Dr. Hutchinson stated that on the nails of the hat-rack he discovered human hairs that corresponded with those of Mrs. Samuels. Dr. Hutchinson upon a more minute examination had discarded the bludgeon or hammer theory, partly because of these same hairs, and also because he discovered that the skull was not fractured, but that death had been caused by hæmorrhage set up by concussion of the brain. The broken hat-rack would exactly explain these wounds. These are the very curious and unusual features in this particularly revolting case.



But it was very far-reaching in some respects. A species of terror among elderly mistresses of houses existed for a considerable time. Mrs. Samuels was murdered, Miss Hacker was murdered, and Mrs. Thomas was murdered by Kate Webster. Only the last-named was brought to justice, and although Miss Hacker was not the mistress of a house, it was presumed that she was alone in it with a servant the last time that she was seen alive. Elderly ladies in the suburbs especially were very nervous during the dark winter nights. And with good reason. For Burton Crescent is in the centre of London, there is a police patrol quite close, and yet between 8 p.m. and midnight an old lady of seventy-five years of age can be done to death there with impunity. Believe me, in those days it gave householders to think furiously.

## • THE CASE OF HANNAH DOBBS

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**T**HIS case will always prove of peculiar fascination for me because I remember the facts so clearly, and what excitement they caused at the time. Moreover, 1879 was a vintage year for the criminologist, as in addition to the mystery I am now treating of, we had the fiendish Kate Webster and the Master Criminal—Charles Peace.

But to proceed. On May 9 of this remarkable year the dead body of a woman was discovered in the coal cellar of 4 Euston Square—a lodging-house—a point to which I shall have occasion to allude later. The circumstances were unusual. This coal cellar had not been used for some time, and one wonders why. Upon this occasion it was reopened in order to receive a ton of coal, ordered on behalf of a new lodger. We may be pardoned for wondering where previous lodgers, or the owners themselves, had kept the coal that was a necessity for carrying on the house. Well, the coal-heaver while stacking the coal struck what seemed to him at first to be a sack or bundle of clothes. But a second glance showed it to be a little pile of human remains. Subsequent medical examination proved these to be those of a woman of about fifty-five years of age. Moreover, it was clear that

these remains had lain there for two or three years, and that the victim had been strangled, for a rope was fastened round the neck. The position of the body and the absence of any beam or hook disposed of the theory of suicide. But far more important than that, the body had been covered with quicklime, with the result that the trunk had become dismembered and the features completely destroyed. There was, however, strangely enough, one clue that the quicklime had not destroyed, and that was a black silk dress. Nay, more, a jacket of the same material, a lace shawl, a species of hood, and a bonnet were all clearly defined. This was proof conclusive that when she met her death the unfortunate victim had been done to death either in the street, or upon the point of going out of doors. But silk dress and all out-door wearing apparel crumbled into powder at the faintest touch, like so much burnt paper. But what was not pulverised was a cheap brooch that had evidently been fastened to the shawl, and a ring that was picked up on the floor of the cellar. Who was the victim? The lodging-house was kept by a Pole or Russian, by name Bastendorff, but he accounted for all his lodgers since he first took the house two years before. And again I may be pardoned for harking back to the peculiarity of the coal cellar being disused all that time.

Naturally all the papers were very full of this, and among others who read about it were an elderly couple named Dobbs, who lived at Bideford. They communicated with the police and stated that their daughter had been in service there, and they had

heard nothing from her for six months. Could the body be that of their daughter Hannah? Alas! These poor people, who doubtless were a most worthy pair, received a rude shock. Police enquiries elicited the fact that their daughter was alive and well—but in Tothill Prison serving a sentence for theft. One cannot in all the circumstances withhold a feeling of sympathy for the parents. To speculate whether or no one's child is dead, and then to find her a jailbird, must be a crushing blow.

But the doctors had made an interesting discovery. The deceased was a woman of some 5 ft. 8 in. in height, and had suffered from curvature of the spine. Accordingly the detective who had charge of the case thought he might do himself no harm if he took a stroll up to Tothill Prison. As a result he learnt from Hannah Dobbs that among the lodgers at 4 Euston Square in 1877 was a lady of about fifty-five, who had hair resembling that found on the head. But she had only occupied her rooms for a few weeks, and when she left she never saw her again. Asked when exactly she left, Dobbs replied, "In October, 1877." Now upon that the detective paid another visit to Bastendorff and his family, and he procured documentary evidence to the effect that Dobbs' lady—a certain Miss Huish—took the rooms in August, 1877. The next move was to take Dobbs to the mortuary to view the remains. But it has always seemed to me that this was a superfluous action, as there remained so little to identify with certainty. Then Hagen (for that was the detective's name) pressed Dobbs again for the exact date of Miss Huish's departure. The servant

told a queer story. She said that one afternoon after taking the Bastendorff children out for a walk upon her return she found that Miss Huish had gone, and had left a shilling for her as a tip. She had never seen her nor heard from her since. Further cross-examination by Hagen elicited the fact that Miss Huish was an alias of a Miss Hacker, who resided in Canterbury, and who paid periodical visits to the Metropolis in order to collect rents. Dobbs then volunteered the foolish statement that Miss Hacker wore a gold watch and chain every Sunday, but never upon a week-day. Upon this quick-witted Hagen decided to make enquiries at the local pawnshops. At the very first one he struck oil; the shop was within a few yards of 4 Euston Square. Then he staged an identification parade for the benefit of the pawnbroker's assistant. Among the women put up for it the assistant unhesitatingly pointed to Hannah Dobbs as the woman who had pawned the gold watch and chain. Dobbs then stated that this watch and chain had been left to her by an uncle and was her own to pawn. But the watch bore a Canterbury jeweller's name, and was identified by the police of that historic city under interesting circumstances. The life of Miss Hacker was as tragic as her end. An old maid, like countless other women who have drawn a blank in the matrimonial lottery (there not being nearly sufficient men to go round), she should have been the mistress of a home. The deprivation induced, as is so common, eccentricity, and this took the form of bright-coloured dresses, and a refusal to grow old. There was also a persistent refusal to pay her rates and taxes, and it

was in this connection that the watch was locally identified, for, incredible as it may sound, this same watch and chain had formally been distrained upon by order of the Court. She possessed other aliases besides Miss Huish, calling herself Miss Bell and Miss Sycamore. And it is to this aversion to pay her rates and taxes that we must ascribe the reason of her frequent change of name and abode. She would often relate to people that there was a time when she and her sister went by the name of "the Canterbury Belles."

Another damning proof against Hannah Dobbs was the discovery of Miss Hacker's cash-box, which was found in the coal cellar, for witnesses came forward to state that they had seen it in Dobbs' possession. This cash-box is in the Black Museum at Scotland Yard. It contained at the time of the discovery of the crime, oranges and nuts; needless to say the fruits were by then dried.

What was the exact date of the murder? Miss Hacker's rent collector at Canterbury received a letter from her dated October 10, 1877. That was the last communication received from her by anyone. Another resident in Euston Square stated that on the afternoon of Sunday, October 14, she heard a terrible cry proceed from the direction of No. 4. The police believe the crime to have taken place then. Bastendorff was out of town. The only other lodger was out. So were Mrs. Bastendorff and the children. All this was proved by patient investigation. And Miss Hacker wore that gold watch and chain on Sundays.

I think that enough has been shown to warrant Hannah Dobbs' arrest and committal for trial. Lord Brampton (then Mr. Justice Hawkins) presided at the latter.

At the trial the prosecution sought to prove the police theory, and that was that Miss Hacker was struck down on the stairs by some weighty weapon as she was about to leave the house, the blow being dealt from behind. Then, life not being extinct, she was dragged into the cellar and there strangled. More than once Mr. Justice Hawkins recalled the medical witnesses to support the probability that death was finally caused by strangulation. Moreover, on the stair-carpet was a large stain, analysis of which showed that it was caused by human blood. Yet, *mirabile dictu*, Hannah Dobbs was acquitted. Her counsel<sup>1</sup> challenged the prosecution to prove the exact means of killing. They replied that the cord was deeply embedded in the neck and that the murderer (or as they affirmed the murderess) after the deed, not satisfied with the agency of quicklime, had used some other chemical to assist the latter in hasty decomposition. Mr. Mead made a point of the fact that a domestic servant like Hannah Dobbs would have no knowledge of chemistry. He then proceeded to state that nobody could prove that Miss Hacker and the accused were the only people alone in the house upon that Sunday afternoon. The temporary absence of the other ordinary inmates did

<sup>1</sup> The defence was entrusted to Mr. F. Mead, whom I assume to be the well-known Metropolitan magistrate. Against such an array of counsel his success was a triumph. (A. L.)

not preclude the presence of another person, or of even more than one person. Then counsel laid great stress upon the fact of the enormous risk incurred by Hobbs in dragging the body downstairs when at any moment anybody might return to the house, letting himself or herself in with a latchkey. And then, suppose the body to have been deposited in the coal-cellar, would Dobbs have allowed it to remain there all that time when she could so easily have disposed of the remains? Now against the first part of this argument we have the Mrs. Pearcey Case<sup>1</sup> of twenty-one years later. She ran a far greater risk than dragging a body down stairs when she was the only living occupant of the house, for the time being, for she placed the dead bodies of Mrs. Hogg and her baby in a perambulator that remained in the hall with its ghastly freight for some hours. But as regards the coal cellar Mr. Mead is answered by the amazing fact that it was not until long after Hannah Dobbs left 4 Euston Square that the body was discovered. I repeat once more that that coal cellar intrigues me.

The defence established the fact that there had been improper relations between Hannah Dobbs and one of the Bastendorff family, with a view of throwing suspicion on *them*, but they easily cleared themselves. They were comparatively well-to-do, and were not likely to commit a murder for a few paltry trinkets.

Mr. Mead lastly asseverated that the prosecution had failed to establish beyond all doubt that the remains, the discovery of which had led to this trial,

<sup>1</sup> See *Thou Shalt Do No Murder*. (Messrs. Hurst & Blackett.)



were those of Miss Hacker, granted that the watch and chain and cash-box were hers.

Young as I was at the time the sensation (I had almost written consternation) caused throughout the country by the verdict is as fresh in my mind as if the trial had taken place yesterday. And I recall how shortly afterwards there were queues to see the effigy of the acquitted that was placed on the stairs just *outside* the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's.

I remember many years later the original of another figure similarly placed, brought an action against Madame Tussaud's, and he succeeded in obtaining an injunction against them. I am almost certain that it was Monson. He claimed that the proximity of his effigy to the Chamber of Horrors was a reflection upon him, and that but for the Ardlamont Case (if it was Monson's effigy) he would never have been in the exhibition at all. There is little doubt as to that, as his services to the State would scarcely have warranted it.

Whether readers think that Hannah Dobbs was one of the lucky ones of this earth must rest with them. De Quincey said that the worst of murder was that it led on to Sabbath-breaking. Whoever killed Miss Hacker committed both crimes.

In one of Mr. Elliot O'Donnell's books upon ghost-hunting, I think it is *Haunted Houses in England and Wales*, he narrates the following experience. I have not the book by me, but this is the gist of what he says :

Many years ago he arrived one evening at Euston (I think from Ireland) and missed the connection on to somewhere else. So he had perforce to seek a room for the night and catch an early train on in the morning. He chose one in the vicinity and in due course turned in and fell asleep. Suddenly he found himself wide awake again, and to his amazement he saw clearly seated at the dressing-table a middle-aged woman admiring herself and trying on jewellery. He could see her face plainly reflected in the mirror, and could witness her self-satisfaction. Then gradually he saw her expression change until it became absolutely frozen with terror, and he also saw that her eyes were uplifted. Following them he perceived just dangling over her head a rope with a noose in it. As I remember the story he could not distinguish who it was who held the rope from behind. And all the time, Mr. O'Donnell said, he felt as though he could not stir an inch, but lay fascinated. Upon the disappearance of the vision he at once recovered himself.

This of course would account for the strangulation, but it would upset the bludgeon theory. Interesting as Mr. O'Donnell must have found the experience, I venture to think that most of us would have wished that we had caught that train. I for one.

## VI

### THE PIMLICO MYSTERY

**I** HAVE always thought that if Sir Edward Clarke had been asked what he himself considered his greatest triumph, the great advocate would have replied the acquittal of Mrs. Bartlett, just as in later years Marshall Hall regarded as his greatest achievement the acquittal of Ronald Light in the Green Bicycle Case.

Mrs. Bartlett was the prominent figure in what at the time was known as the Pimlico Poisoning Mystery, and in fact it is known as such to my surviving contemporaries even to this day. It has always been one of the most absorbing poisoning cases of my generation, and if it is not quite so intriguing a study as that of the Maybrick Case, or still less of the Bravo Case, there are sufficient reasons for that. The Maybrick Case was less sordid. The principals were of another world. Still more important in the social scale were the chief actors in the Balham Mystery, and furthermore no one was ever brought to trial in the Bravo Case, and of necessity that must always be provocative of speculation and discussion, for logically when there is insufficient evidence to even justify an arrest, the field of conjecture becomes not only widened but practically boundless.

The New Year of 1886 opened tragically for the inmates at 85 Claverton Street, Pimlico, for Death elected to pay a visit early on New Year's Day. His victim was a lodger by name Thomas Edwin Bartlett, who with his wife had taken rooms there in the previous October, the owners of the house being a couple of the name of Doggett. It is not a promising way of opening the New Year at any time, but to the Doggetts it must have been unusually trying, as the doctor in attendance declined to give the usual medical certificate and very shortly all the country was to know that the Law with all its majesty had intervened.

Who were the Bartletts, and what was their history? Certainly a most unusual one, if not unparalleled.

Thomas Edwin Bartlett, like the immortal Jorrocks, was a grocer, and the owner of prosperous multiple shops. Thomas had a brother named Charles who resided at Kingston-on-Thames, and living in the latter's house was a young French girl of nineteen years of age, her full name being Adelaide Blanche de la Tremoille, and, like Joan of Arc, she hailed from Orleans. And if all is true that has been said and written about this extraordinary case (or even half of it), Mademoiselle de la Tremoille resembled the Maid of Orleans in one leading characteristic, for the conditions under which she married are amazing. There have been many men who have taken unto themselves wives with the proviso that their future existence shall be as though they were brother and sister (incidentally in the eyes of God an appalling

blasphemy, for it is a premeditated violation of marriage vows made at His altar), but Mr. Thomas Bartlett seems to have established a record. He met his bride at his brother's house. In the same year—in April, 1875—he married her. But immediately after the ceremony he packed her off to boarding-school. In fact, she practically left the church at Croydon, where the nuptials took place, for the school at Stoke Newington. Nineteen is a somewhat advanced age for a new pupil to put in an appearance at a boarding-school (especially a married woman), but apparently her husband wanted her to be what is generally called "finished." Bartlett was himself a young man, only eleven years older than his wife, i.e. thirty years of age. This extraordinary ménage continued for two years. The wife only came home from the boarding-school during the holidays. We are not told who were her parents, or rather who was her mother. All we know is that her father was an Englishman of means, and that her unmarried mother was French, and in France the girl was born and bred. Upon her leaving the boarding-school Mr. Bartlett does not yet appear to think her standard of education up to requirement, for he actually sends her off to a convent in Belgium for a year. At last, in 1878, she then being twenty-two, they lived under the same roof over one of Mr. Bartlett's shops in Herne Hill. But even then the husband showed himself in an extraordinary light. After a time he invited his father, who was a builder by profession—and incidentally a widower,—to take up his quarters in the rooms at Herne Hill, which in any case could not be described as spacious. And

as Bartlett senior disliked his daughter-in-law (presumably he had all the lower-class Englishman's dislike of all "foreigners,") things must have been very unpleasant for the wife. And still more so when the old man insinuated that a third son of his—Frederick—was Adelaide's lover. It was here that Thomas Bartlett followed exactly the lines of Sir Leicester Dedlock, and forced his father to sign an apology for the imputation, and the document was drawn up by a solicitor. So in this respect we give full marks to Mr. Thomas Bartlett.

The Bartletts moved from Herne Hill to Lordship Lane, Dulwich, in 1883, and there they resided over another of the multiple grocer's shops. In 1884 the ménage moved to Merton, and it is important to note that whether it was due to the signed apology or not, Mr. Bartlett, senior, lived on his own account after the Herne Hill household was broken up.

In 1885 there entered into the lives of the Bartletts a newcomer who was to play a very leading part, to wit, a Wesleyan minister. His name was the Rev. George Dyson. He was as unlike an Anglican cleric as could be imagined, a soldierly moustache being a striking characteristic, but then with preachers of other than Church of England proclivities it is by no means uncommon for them to wear this form of hirsute appendage. The Rev. George Dyson was twenty-seven years of age, and when the Bartletts first met him at the Wesleyan Chapel at Merton the husband invited him to the house, which, by the way, went by the name of The Cottage. The next move was a

suggestion on Mr. Bartlett's part that the reverend gentleman should act as tutor to his wife. In other words, that her education should recommence. The subjects were to be history, geography, easy mathematics, and above all Latin. Mrs. Bartlett had few women friends and Mr. Bartlett seemed to have few or no male acquaintances in private life, so that on the face of it Mrs. Bartlett's mode of existence *per se* underwent a change. Her husband was all day away. During practically all that time Mr. Dyson was at The Cottage. And even when Mr. Bartlett returned home in the evening he would insist upon the clergyman remaining to share the evening repast.

Now when the lease of The Cottage, Merton, expired, the Bartletts moved to 85 Claverton Street—but not immediately. The whole of September, 1885, they spent at Dover, and there they were twice visited by Mr. Dyson, the cost of his tickets being defrayed by Mr. Bartlett. But it is to be noted that most days Mr. Bartlett went up to London on business, and on one or two occasions he caught the boat train at 3 a.m., and did not return to Dover till 10 p.m. Moreover, in early September Mr. Bartlett announced to both Dyson and his wife that he had that day made his will and had left everything absolutely to Adelaide, appointing as his executors his solicitor and Dyson himself.

The Bartletts settled at 85 Claverton Street on October 3, 1885, and by this time Mr. Dyson was so tame-cat that he even kept a pair of slippers and a change of unclerical and more comfortable garb at his friends'

rooms. The proprietor of these rooms, Mr. Frederick Doggett, was the local Registrar of Births and Deaths. If we may believe the evidence of Alice, the Doggetts' servant (and let us remember that it was given upon oath), Dyson never brought any scholastic books to the house, nor were any ever kept there, and furthermore he and Mrs. Bartlett had been seen together more than once by her (Alice Fulcher) under equivocal circumstances.

Like Charles Bravo, Mr. Bartlett suffered from dental trouble, but otherwise his general health was excellent, in fact only five years before his decease he had been accepted by an insurance office as a first-class life, he being then thirty-six years of age. But on December 8, 1885, he complained that he felt seedy. The following day he was manifestly worse and a Dr. Leach, who lived round the corner in Charlwood Street, was called in. And here again we have many features recalling the symptoms in the Bravo Case. Dr. Leach was positive that the patient's condition was due to mercurial poisoning, but Bartlett denied having taken any mercury as stoutly as Charles Bravo denied having taken any irritant poison (tartar emetic, or antimony.) On December 13, the patient was so bad that Dr. Leach was compelled to inject morphia, Bartlett complaining that he could get no sleep. On December 15 he ascribed the patient's condition to the state of his teeth. In these days we should call it pyorrhea, but in 1885 medicine was not so far advanced as now, and at that time teeth were not considered the primary cause of so many diseases as they are at the present day.



Accordingly Dr. Leach called in a dentist,<sup>1</sup> also living in Charlwood Street, and by December 21 nearly all poor Mr. Bartlett's teeth had been extracted.

During Mr. Bartlett's illness his father was only admitted three times to the sick-room. On the other hand, Mr. Dyson always visited the patient and remained with him.

On December 19, Dr. Leach called in a second opinion, Dr. Dudley, of 71 Belgrave Road. Not only did the new doctor approve of Dr. Leach's treatment, but he pooh-poohed Mr. Bartlett's prostration, and counselled him to bestir himself and go for a good walk. On December 27 (a Sunday) Mr. Dyson called at 85 Claverton Street at 9 p.m. But ere he entered he encountered Mrs. Bartlett, who said that she was just going out to post a letter. As they walked to the pillar-box Mrs. Bartlett handed Dyson a sovereign to obtain some chloroform for her husband. To Dyson's query why she did not obtain it from Dr. Leach she said he would never entrust so dangerous a drug to her, and eventually next day Dyson obtained the chloroform from three chemists, two at Wimbledon, and one at Putney, 4 ozs. in all—two 1-oz. bottles at Wimbledon, and at the Putney chemist, two 1-oz. bottles. On December 29, Dyson handed the 4 ozs. of chloroform to Mrs. Bartlett while they were out walking together, the drug being in a 6-oz. medicine bottle. On December 28, Bartlett had gone for a drive in a hansom-cab, and on December 29, Dr. Leach told him that it would be unnecessary now for him to come every day, but

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Roberts. (A. L.)

perceiving signs of recurring serious dental trouble he secretly made an arrangement with Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Bartlett that Mr. Bartlett should pay another visit to the former on December 31. Accordingly at 5 p.m. of that day Dr. Leach acted at the dentist's as anæsthetist, and Mr. Roberts extracted the remaining teeth, Mrs. Bartlett being seated in the waiting-room.

That night the Doggetts saw the New Year in. At 4 a.m., Mr. Doggett was awoke by a knock at his door. Upon opening it he beheld Mrs. Bartlett, who told him that she thought her husband was dead. The news was especially stunning to Mr. Doggett as, in spite of his recent illness and his dental trouble, Mr. Bartlett had eaten enormously on the previous day, and there seemed no trace of his being an invalid. However, he hurried downstairs and discovered not only the truth of Mrs. Bartlett's assertion, but that her husband had been dead for two or three hours. Mr. Doggett detected a pungent odour in the room and by the bedside was a glass of brandy which also seemed to possess a peculiar smell.

At 4.30 a.m. Dr. Leach arrived, fetched by Alice Fulcher at Mrs. Bartlett's orders.

In his evidence subsequently Dr. Leach stated that on December 30 he told Mr. Bartlett that he was going to discontinue his visits because he did not think he needed daily attendance, whereat Mr. Bartlett expostulated and said that he insisted upon having continual medical attendance. The last time that he saw Mr. Bartlett alive was outside Mr. Roberts' house after he had given him the anæsthetic. A few

hours later (at 4 a.m.) he was fetched by Alice Fulcher (the Doggetts' housemaid) and told that Mr. Bartlett was dead. (And during that interval it transpired that Mr. Bartlett had eaten a big supper and had told Alice Fulcher that he was looking forward to eating a large haddock for breakfast.)

Mr. Justice Wills, who presided at the trial, put the all-important question to Dr. Leach: "Was there anything whatever in the previous conduct of the deceased, in your observation of him continuously from December 10 to 31, to suggest to you the probability of death from natural causes?"

The answer given decisively was, "No, nothing."

Now the man who set the ball of scandal rolling appears to have been Mr. Bartlett, senior, who had apparently never forgiven the signed apology incident. On being apprised of the news he seems to have decided that the death was *not* due to natural causes. We are told that his first action upon entering the death chamber was to try and detect the smell of almonds (prussic acid) on his dead son's lips, and to Dr. Leach, who was present, he remarked that of course there must be an inquest. Many practitioners in Dr. Leach's place would have taken umbrage, for Mr. Bartlett bluntly told him that he wished to exclude any doctors who had attended his son from performing the autopsy. But Dr. Leach seems to have ignored any offence and to have assented, but it is important to note that among the four doctors present at the post-mortem, which was conducted at 85 Claverton Street, one of the three participants was Dr. Dudley. The fourth doctor (Cheney) held a sort

of medical watching brief for Mr. Bartlett, senior. The old gentleman cut his daughter-in-law dead, and refused to remain in the house, but paced up and down Claverton Street.

Dr. Leach did not share the views of his colleagues when they declared their intention of having the contents of the stomach analysed, and was confident that death was due to natural causes, and that their suspicions were groundless. But at this juncture Dyson began to be sorry he had ever executed the chloroform commission, for Dr. Leach privately told him, Mrs. Bartlett and Mr. Wood, the family solicitor, that the other doctors suspected the presence of chloroform in the stomach. We may imagine the anxiety with which, upon this, Dyson questioned Mrs. Bartlett. The last-named swore that the 4 ozs. in the 6-oz. bottle were intact. Dyson wanted ocular demonstration. And there was quite a little breeze between the two, and finally Dyson was asked "to forget that he had ever bought any chloroform at all." Then it was that he began to lose his head. He had to preach a sermon on the Sunday (January 3), and on his way to the church at Tooting Bec as he walked across Wandsworth Common to the adjoining one he threw one by one each of the 1-oz. bottles into the furze bushes. The wretched man subsequently called on Dr. Leach, and there his worst fears were realised. The autopsy declared death to be due to chloroform poisoning and there was no trace of the internal disease from which Mrs. Bartlett had always declared the deceased to have suffered, but what was more important still, she had always im-

pressed upon Dyson that he so suffered. Then it was that Mr. Dyson abandoned all self-restraint, and to a friend of the Bartletts, a Mr. Matthews, he described himself as being duped by a wicked woman, and that Mr. Bartlett, junior, had deliberately thrown them together. Last, but not least, he gave all the details of the purchase of the chloroform.

On January 9 a very dramatic incident occurred. In the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, Dyson had an interview with Mrs. Bartlett, at 98 Friern Road, East Dulwich, the residence of the Matthews', and where Mrs. Bartlett was for the moment staying. It was not a pleasant gathering. Dyson upbraided Mrs. Bartlett for ruining his career and forcing him to quit the ministry, but it is all important to note that he succeeded in obtaining from Mrs. Bartlett a statement to the effect that on January 6 she had poured all the chloroform from the 6-oz. bottle out of the window of the railway carriage, and the bottle itself she threw into Peckham Rye Pond. That was the last meeting between Dyson and Mrs. Bartlett prior to the trial.

Then one day (January 26) Dr. Leach came to Mrs. Bartlett and said that she must be delighted to learn that chloroform was the cause of her husband's death, and not a more subtle poison. But to Dr. Leach's astonishment Mrs. Bartlett evinced no relief, on the contrary, marked uneasiness. She then proceeded to tell Leach what has been already stated earlier as to her marital relations, and that the only occasion on which the platonic condition had been broken had resulted in her still-born child. After

that she declared that Mr. Bartlett had deliberately passed her on to Dyson. Then, shortly before his death, he decided to take her back from him and exact his lawful rights. But she protested, and hinted that it was too late in the day, and whenever he became too amorous she would hold a chloroformed handkerchief over his face. On the night he died the bottle of chloroform was by his side and he was cognisant of its presence. Asked by Leach what became of the bottle of chloroform, she gave the same account as she gave to Dyson in the presence of the Matthews'. That was the story that Mrs. Bartlett told Dr. Leach.

On February 4, Mr. Hicks held the adjourned inquest. By this time "the Pimlico Mystery" was the Talk of the Town. On February 4, Dr. Stevenson, the public analyst, declared death to be due to an overdose of chloroform.

At a further adjournment on February 11 the police gave evidence that a page of Squire's *Companion to the British Pharmacopæia* had been recently much read. This copy was among Mrs. Bartlett's effects at 85 Claverton Street, and the page dealt with the properties of chloroform. On the same day Dyson gave evidence and he reiterated so often his determination to "make a clean breast of it," that Mrs. Bartlett was arrested on the spot, charged with murdering her husband. At the next adjournment (February 18) Dyson was arrested as being an accessory before the fact.

Both appeared before Mr. Partridge at Westminster Police Court. And on March 20 he committed them

for trial. During the whole of the police court proceedings neither Dyson nor Mrs. Bartlett looked at each other.

The trial of Adelaide Bartlett and the Rev. George Dyson opened at the Old Bailey on Monday, April 12, 1886. Mr. Justice Wills, as already mentioned, presided. For the Crown were Lord Russell, Sir Harry Poland, Mr. R. S. Wright and Mr. Moloney. For Mrs. Bartlett, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. Mead and Mr. Edward Beal. For the Rev. George Dyson, Sir Frank Lockwood and Sir Charles Mathews.

Few trials if any could have opened more dramatically, for no sooner was the judge seated than Frank Lockwood rose and with the full concurrence of Sir Edward Clarke applied for the separate trial of the accused. But before Mr. Justice Wills could acquiesce (and that would have followed as a matter of course) the Attorney-General (Sir Charles Russell, as he then was) threw a bomb-shell into the Court by declaring that the Crown had no evidence to offer against Mr. Dyson that would justify a case being submitted to a jury. Upon which Mr. Justice Wills directed the jury to find a verdict of "Not Guilty" against the male prisoner, and this injunction being, of course, promptly obeyed, Dyson was set at liberty. But the corollary with which I shall deal in a moment was still more electrifying.

Meanwhile the Attorney-General had opened the case with the most scrupulous impartiality, declaring that he would leave the jury to form their own

conclusions by listening to the evidence of the witnesses that would be called, but this point he did dwell upon and that was when on January 26 Mrs. Bartlett confided her life-story to Dr. Leach and admitted that she had in her possession a considerable quantity of chloroform. Nobody questioned the cause of Mr. Bartlett's death, all the jury had to decide was the agency that was responsible for the presence of the chloroform in the stomach, for because of its burning propensities no living person could swallow chloroform inadvertently. Suicide was out of the question. There remained what the prosecution averred was the true explanation. Mr. Bartlett had been murdered. And because of these same uncomfortable sensations produced by the drug, the chloroform had been administered to him after he had first been stupefied. According to Mr. Bartlett, senior, his daughter-in-law attributed his son's illness to "verdigris poisoning," and epistolary evidence was tendered to show that he had great difficulty in seeing his son, and that Mrs. Bartlett was still pursuing her vendetta against the father. One of the most important declarations of this most important witness was that he knew the signed declaration to be false, but that he put his name to it for peace and quietness.

Mrs. Doggett swore that the fire had been kept up all night on New Year's Day. When aroused and told of the tragedy, she noticed this, and proved to the Court that she was an observant woman, for in reply to Sir Edward Clarke she said that a fire when banked up always burnt hollow; this one had



been intermittently poked. She asked Mrs. Bartlett if she had given her husband any drops of chloroform, because before she went to bed Mrs. Bartlett had mentioned her possession of the drug. Mrs. Bartlett denied having given her husband anything.

Then followed the servant, Alice Fulcher, who described familiarities between Dyson and Mrs. Bartlett. She referred to Mr. Bartlett's voracious appetite, in spite of dental trouble, and his being at the time a semi-invalid, and declared that it had latterly been the practice for Mrs. Bartlett to take a basin of beef-tea into the sick-room the last thing at night. This beef-tea was prepared by the maid herself. On the night of December 31, at the request of Mrs. Bartlett, she left the beef-tea on the landing outside, having just before taken into the bedroom a scuttle of coals. It was about 11.30 p.m. when she left the beef-tea. At 4 a.m. she was informed by Mrs. Bartlett that her husband was dead. Mrs. Bartlett had recently been in the habit of sitting up all night with her husband, but she could not help remarking that at 4 a.m., upon the announcement of the tragedy, she was wearing a different dress to the one she had on at 11.30 p.m. the night before.

Then after formal evidence from the insurance office that Mr. Bartlett's was a first-class life came the great sensation. The next witness for the Crown was no less a person than the *Rev. George Dyson*.

If it had been dramatic to withdraw Dyson from the dock, what must have been the sensation produced

in Court by naming him a witness for the prosecution against his recent co-prisoner? Speaking from memory, I can recall no such *dénouement* in the Law Courts in modern times. It was a terrible ordeal for any man, and I will deal with that a little later. But he tendered damning evidence when he said that Mrs. Bartlett frequently spoke of the "internal pain" of her husband, and that the last-named never even referred to it. Moreover, she always told him that to soothe the suffering she gave him chloroform and that her husband had a dislike to doctors in the house.

Mr. Dyson made a "clean breast of it" at the trial and so kept his word passed at the inquest, and he even pointed out to the police the exact furze bushes where he had thrown the four 1-oz. bottles on his walk across Wandsworth Common to Tooting Bec, to preach on Sunday, January 3. Perhaps Sir Edward Clarke extracted from the Rev. George Dyson the most extraordinary admissions ever listened to by Bench or Bar. He swore on oath that Bartlett asked him if he could find Biblical authority for a man having two wives, "one for companionship and one for service." And possibly Mr. Justice Darling never caused more merriment than Mr. Justice Wills did, when he pertinently asked: "Were they both to be his bedfellows?" Incidentally Dyson replied that he understood Bartlett to mean that both were to be wives in the fullest sense. Well might the judge ask if Bartlett were serious? Well might his audience express surprise when Dyson answered in the affirmative.

Several witnesses then attested to the great affection that this extraordinary man expressed for Dyson and that "George and Edwin" were like brothers.

There was one statement in Dyson's evidence that must not be overlooked. He had been under the impression that he could not marry until he had been in the ministry for two years. He ascertained that the qualification was only one year, and that therefore instead of October, 1887, October, 1886, would end the prescribed period of celibacy.

The major part of two days was devoted to expert medical evidence, but we may size this up, as our space is so brief, with commenting upon the evidence of Dr. Thomas Stevenson and of Dr. Tidy, the analyst to the Home Office. The former stated that chloroform does not necessarily leave an odour about the mouth; in half an hour if the lips were parted its presence would not be detected. If the patient were stupefied first the swallowing of chloroform would be attended with greater effect. If chloroform passed down the windpipe the traces would be seen for several hours after death. That organ would probably be burnt and the "period of rigidity" would last a minute at the outside.

It had been proved that when Mr. Bartlett had visited Mr. Roberts, the dentist, he had been a long time succumbing to the anæsthetic, and Dr. Stevenson imparted the information that if a patient is insensible to one anæsthetic his temperament is probably arranged on fixed lines and that therefore he would be equally insensible to another.

Dr. Tidy swore that he had only known in the whole of his career one case of death caused by swallowing chloroform in its liquid form and that was in the case of a suicide. But if a patient were asleep and the drug was held under his nostrils the result of the inhalation could be unconsciousness. In that case liquid chloroform might be poured down the throat. But Dr. Tidy added that he had three times in his life attempted to administer the drug to a sleeping patient and that he had met with two failures against one success.

The Pimlico Case is remarkable again for yet another unusual happening. Before beginning his speech for the defence Sir Edward Clarke announced that he was going to call no witnesses. He took the line that no evidence had been called to show that the accused was not the most devoted of wives and yet we were asked to believe that for no rhyme nor reason she was "suddenly transformed into a murderess," and in committing the murder had made use of an agent never before employed in the commission of the greatest offence known to Law. The intense agony induced by swallowing liquid chloroform would alone have debarred Mrs. Bartlett from using it. But then Sir Edward made use of an argument that I always think tended to procure Mrs. Bartlett's acquittal more than any that he adduced—he enquired, if she reduced Mr. Bartlett to unconsciousness by inhalation of chloroform, why did she not continue the process until he was dead? Why not remove him painlessly? Why run the risk of provoking

agony, and tell-tale symptoms in the deceased's anatomy? It is a wonderful argument, as the reader will admit, and I am sure that it saved Mrs. Bartlett's life.

Sir Edward then gave an epitome of this strange household and stated that Mr. Dyson's testimony as to the "two wives" theory had been borne out by Mr. Bartlett, senior. The learned counsel then dwelt upon Edwin Bartlett's will made on September 3, 1885. No one had ever imputed undue or sinister influence here, neither of the couple was present, and moreover the will was made in the husband's office, and not at his private residence.

Evidence had shown that Mrs. Bartlett was in the habit of retiring to a back room in order to wash. While she was absent from the sick-room could the prosecution advance any reason why Mr. Bartlett could not stretch out his hand, reach the chloroform bottle, and so end his sufferings. Her whole conduct, both before and after the death, suggested on the part of Mrs. Bartlett the perfect wife. Furthermore, when Mrs. Bartlett accused her husband of turning her over to Dyson, what was to prevent the husband in a spirit of chivalry—mistaken admittedly—saying to himself, "Why should I stand in their way?" And so he put an end to it.

That is a précis of the line of Sir Edward Clarke's historic defence of Mrs. Bartlett. It lasted six hours and brought the fifth day's trial to a conclusion. (It must have preceded a terrible night of anguish for Mrs. Bartlett.) On the last day Sir Charles Russell replied for the Crown. His main argument was that

if chloroform had never been employed as an agent of murder before, it was never too late to begin, and that the same might be said of Palmer and strychnine, or Lamson and aconitine. He deprecated any motive for Mr. Bartlett's suicide and rejected the misadventure theory.

Upon the whole Mr. Justice Wills summed up in the prisoner's favour. He warned the jury that Dyson's statements and evidence must be to a certain extent discounted, he dwelt on the "model wife" character that Mrs. Bartlett had always displayed, but he made one extra great point in her favour and that was that if she herself had given her husband a fatal dose from the bottle at his bedside, would she not afterwards have at least made some attempt to clean it?

The jury were absent exactly one hour. Mrs. Bartlett, almost carried back to the dock by two wardresses, was the only woman in Court without a hat. But it transpired that the jury only required to know at what time on New Year's Day the Doggetts went to bed. Upon being informed at 12.30 a.m., they again retired, and were absent exactly another hour. Upon their return the wretched prisoner was seen to be livid and her eyes were closed. But even then her torture was not ended, for the foreman delivered the verdict in a periphrastic way and declared "although there is the gravest suspicion," etc., instead of answering to the point, "Not Guilty." The verdict was greeted with cheers inside the Court, but oddly enough they were preceded by cheers in the street, and one wonders how

this fore-knowledge of the result of the trial reached *the crowd*.

Sir Edward Clarke is generally supposed in this case to have surpassed his eloquence even in causes célèbres like the Baccarat Scandal or the Trial of Oscar Wilde.

Assuming Mrs. Bartlett to be innocent or guilty, Mr. Bartlett may well have allowed his wife to try the experiment of giving him a good night by the aid of chloroform. But our respected member, Sir George Turner, who has devoted special time and study to the Pimlico Mystery, states that no case to his knowledge offers so many loopholes in the medical evidence. He says that the evidence of that nature is so perfunctory and unconvincing that it will stand analysis no better than the contents of poor Mr. Edwin Bartlett's stomach.

It is not for a layman like myself to trespass upon this domain, and to step in where angels may well fear to tread. I must leave it to the reader to form his, or her, exact opinion. Meanwhile let me quote an amusing anecdote of another very distinguished member of the Crimes Club—the late Sir John Hall—who likewise is an authority on the Pimlico Mystery.

We all venerate the memory of Queen Victoria, for it was during her reign that this country attained its zenith, and I fear that never as long as this world continues will it ever rise to those great heights again, certainly not within the next forty or fifty years. Well, the surgeon-in-ordinary to the Great White

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Queen was the late Sir James Paget. Asked whether he thought Mrs. Bartlett innocent or guilty, Sir James—a very witty man—replied, “I cannot say, but now that the case is finished, if only in the interests of science, Mrs. Bartlett should have told us how she did it.”



## VII

### THE PEASENHALL MYSTERY.

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I HAVE never been a schoolmaster, but I can well believe that that profession has two special features attached to it. Firstly, the great advantage in the length of the holidays, and secondly, the absorbing interest in watching the solution of the problem, "The boy: what will he become?" Many a schoolmaster must inwardly speculate as to whether this boy is going far in the world or that boy is going to be a dismal failure. Very often he must prophesy to himself whether one pupil is going to shine at one species of Bar, and some other pupil spend most of his time at the other sort.

But most of us without being members of the scholastic profession must have given a passing thought as to the future of some schoolfellow or fellow-undergraduate. Very often at school we are quite wrong in our prognostications. The swells of those days, like many Senior Wranglers, are never heard of again. Napoleon, Cecil Rhodes, Winston Churchill, and scores of famous men cut no ice in their schooldays. One wonders if their masters in spite of this foretold a future for them or not. But at the University it is far easier to pick out future men of mark, and I have never forgotten a certain luncheon





## THE PEASENHALL

party given by the present Recorder of London when we were fellow-undergraduates at Jesus College, Cambridge, and to which I was honoured with an invitation. As far as my recollection serves there were only six of us, but I well recall how I left Ernest Wild's rooms with the certainty that three of the party would be heard of in after-life. The first, Townsend-Warner (an excellent cricketer, by the way), evinced such scholarship that there could be only one professor for him. He became a master at Harrow, and I shall always think that but for his untimely death he would have become Headmaster of the famous school on the hill. As it was, he left a name behind him that will always be honoured at Harrow. His father was Headmaster of Newton Abbot and a relative is the distinguished authoress.

The second of that party was the son of a rich father. I refer to poor Percy Illingworth. A wonderful Rugby player, spare man for the 'Varsity Crew, one felt instinctively that neither wealth nor prowess at sport was going to decoy him from the path of useful citizenship. He, like Townsend-Warner, died young, but not before he had been a brilliant parliamentarian, and the Whip of his party.

The third member of that luncheon party was the host himself. Perhaps I felt more positive of him than of anybody I ever met. A member of the Rugby fifteen (and what a wonderful fifteen it was!), full of fun, the best of company, one always realised the vein of seriousness, the *mens sana in corpore sano*. "Look! what beautiful books!" said Townsend-Warner to me, pointing to a bookcase full of

exquisitely bound tomes, after we had risen from the luncheon table. I agreed. It was unusual, unique perhaps, to find books like those in any undergraduate's rooms.

I have just mentioned Wild's vein of seriousness ; even in those days he was deeply conscientious, and the habit has lasted him all through his life. Let one example suffice. I have told it elsewhere. But possibly it may bear repeating. At Jesus, Wild saved my life. I have had it from his own lips time after time during the forty-two years that have elapsed since that deed of heroism that he has never been able to decide definitely in his own mind whether he acted rightly or wrongly in preserving me from death. He assures me to this day that it still worries him profoundly. I can find people with little effort who would not hesitate to point out to him that no man ever committed a more reprehensible action.

Wild was the youngest judge<sup>1</sup> ever appointed, as the reader can see for himself. I believe that the record still stands. But he would be the first to admit that his greatest triumph in all his distinguished career was his successful defence of Gardiner in the Peasenhall Case, a defence that will be lauded as long as the Courts of Justice exist. As Recorder of London, Wild has been an outstanding success. Firmness itself when needed, combined with a heart of gold. But I will wager a whole ducat that in his heart of hearts it is Peasenhall that affords him his greatest gratification in life.

In our Crimes Club, which is now in its twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Norwich. (A. L.)

eighth year, one is often asked what is the greatest evening in its history. We have an iron rule that what transpires remains within four walls, but naturally the subjects that are to be discussed are another proposition, for it is obvious that any unusually interesting case is bound to come up for dissection sooner or later. Most of the evenings are red-letter ones, but I am betraying no confidence when I say that two stand out. The first was when Sir Charles Russell did Oscar Wilde for us, with Marshall Hall supervising, and the second was when the Rev. Samuel Jones did the Peasehall Case for us. His theory was that Rose Harsent died as the result of an accident and that Gardiner was therefore perfectly innocent. He did not convince *everybody*, but those two masters of criminology, Churton Collins and James Atlay, could find no adjectives good enough to describe the paper of one whom they dubbed "This most ingenious cleric." That paper was read on Sunday, February 25, 1906.

Mr. Jones was then a curate at Bury St. Edmunds. I never saw him again (he was the guest of the Club), but if he has not gone far in the Church then those who deal with preferment do not know a genius when they have one at their disposal.

We had to thank Mr. Herbert Crosse for introducing him to the Club, and Mr. Crosse is undoubtedly correct when he says that East Anglia has nobly done its part in providing the student of criminology with food for research. Names like Corder, Rush, Bennett, Dougal, besides the Peasehall Mystery, at once leap to the mind. And now to the drama.

Peasenhall is a village situated north of Ipswich and south of that centre of shooting—Saxmundham. At the farther end of the main street stands a large residence yclept Providence House. On June 1, 1903 (a Sunday), one William Harsent repaired to this house and upon entering the kitchen was horrified to find the dead body of a woman lying there. His horror increased tenfold when he discovered that the dead woman was his own daughter, who was in service there. The girl lay at the foot of a steep flight of stairs and these stairs led direct to her bedroom. The occupants of Providence House were a Mr. and Mrs. Crisp; they were what is known as “chapel-folk,” and Mr. Crisp was the local deacon. Although the house, as I have stated, was a large one, they kept only one servant, by name Rose, and the daughter of the aforesaid William Harsent.

It is most important before I proceed further to touch on the topography of Providence House. The kitchen and the girl's bedroom were in a wing of the house, and the only way of gaining access to the bedroom was by the steep flight of stairs leading from the kitchen or by a ladder placed outside and thence through the window. When the father made his gruesome find the girl was lying against the stairs, there was a horrible slit right across her throat and she had been stabbed in the left breast. Clad only in her nightdress, the latter was suffused in blood. Closer investigation by the police showed that the nightdress had been burnt in parts and there was a distinct odour of scorched flesh emanating from the body. At once the police suspected that the murderer had

emulated John Lee, the Babbacombe murderer, who after murdering Miss Keyse set fire to her.

Now among the acquaintance of Rose Harsent was an employé of a firm—Messrs. Smyth—who were makers of agricultural machinery. One is always told that in small places one cannot cough without it being heard (and noted) by all the other residents. It must be very trying for those who have to live under those conditions. Fortunate is the family who if not sufficiently endowed with this world's goods to be able to live in a real country house, is as an alternative domiciled in a large city. In Peasehall it was openly said that this employé of Messrs. Smyth—by name William Gardiner—had succeeded in winning Rose Harsent's favours. Like the Crisps, Gardiner was a regular attendant at chapel, and so was Rose Harsent. But among discoveries that were made in the kitchen was a copy of the local newspaper, published in Ipswich, the *East Anglian Daily Times*. A brother of the dead girl swore that this identical copy was lent by him to Gardiner. *The newspaper was lying underneath the dead body.* Also in the immediate vicinity of the dead girl was a lamp that was shattered to pieces. And now this is where the Rev. Samuel Jones's reasoning was so clever. Not only was the lamp broken (obviously Rose had carried it downstairs), but there was also a most extraordinary find, a broken medicine bottle. Gardiner was a married man with a family and this medicine bottle bore a label following a prescription for his children. It was the peculiar manner in which the bottle was broken that originated Mr. Jones's theory of an



accident. The neck was cut clean off, and the greater part of the bottle remained unbroken. We have all of us seen a bottle broken in this same way, generally as the result of missing one's footing on stairs. And that point was insisted upon by Mr. Jones. He further added that there was no subsequent examination of the doctors in order to find out if they discovered any broken glass in the wounds.

One of the villagers stated that on the morning of the murder he detected footprints that led from Gardiner's house to Providence House. These imprints were made by an india-rubber shoe, and a search of Gardiner's habitation resulted in a pair of india-rubber shoes being found that exactly coincided with the footprints. (Cheery place to live in, Peasenhall, so neighbourly !) But far more damning than the footprints was the writing and delivery of a letter of assignation. It appears that Messrs. Smyth made use of a particular colour of envelope at their works—blue envelopes, and yellow envelopes. The local postman swore that on the Saturday afternoon he delivered a letter in a yellow envelope addressed to Rose Harsent. This was the trump card of the prosecution, for it ran :

DR. R,

I will try to see you to-night at twelve o'clock at your place. If you put a light in your window about ten for about ten minutes, then you can put it out again. Do not have a light in your room at twelve, as I will come round to the back.

This letter was unsigned. But Mrs. Crisp swore that she took the yellow envelope from the postman and left it upon the kitchen table for the addressee. Mrs. Crisp also stated that Rose Harsent was enceinte. It appears from the evidence that Rose Harsent did not know what was the matter with her until Mrs. Crisp told her. But before all this transpired, upon the evidence of the shoes and the letter of assignation Gardiner was arrested and subsequently committed for trial.

The trial took place at Ipswich in the following November, that is to say over five months after the murder. Mr. Justice Grantham presided, Sir Henry Dickens (afterwards the Common Serjeant) and the Hon. John de Grey (afterwards the Metropolitan Magistrate) were for the Crown. The defence was intrusted to young Mr. Wild and to Mr. Claughton Scott.

Sir Henry (then Mr.) Dickens, in opening the case, described the finding of the body, and the nature of the wounds, and proceeded to account for them. He spoke of the signals referred to in the letter, and the girl creeping downstairs, lamp in hand, at midnight to meet whom—or what? Her lover? Ere she has set foot on the floor of the kitchen a man springs upon her in the dark, cuts her throat, stabs her savagely, and then ignites the nightdress that clothes her body. That man, the prosecution alleges, is William Gardiner. But before death claims his victim she utters a terrible cry, and that cry is heard by Mrs. Crisp, as was also the subsequent sound of something falling—something like a body. At the

time this happened Mrs. Crisp, who was in the bedroom in the main part of the building, suggested to her husband that he should go and investigate, but it so fell out that while the crime was being enacted one of the worst storms ever known in East Anglia was raging. An appalling storm, and Mr. Crisp pooh-poohed his wife's remark by attributing these noises to her fancy, and the elements. Had Mr. Crisp descended the stairs at his wife's request, and gone into the kitchen, he would have come upon the murderer of Rose Harsent red-handed, and there would never have been any Peasenhall Mystery.

One of the greatest difficulties that Wild had to contend with was the bitter vindictiveness of the witnesses who bore out Sir Henry Dickens' presentment of the case, i.e. the witnesses for the prosecution. The exact sentiment was expressed in these words *literatim*, "We've come here to hang the —, and we're not going home till we've done it." Why? It is difficult, if not impossible, to answer that question. Gardiner was a man of fine physique, in the early thirties, distinctly good-looking, but resembling more the Southern than the Northern race. He was rather olive-complexioned, and his hair coal-black. In Cornwall there are many such (a legacy from the Armada) but in Suffolk such types are rare. His employers—Messrs. Smyth—gave him an excellent character, and he was a regular chapel-goer. (His appearance would rather suggest that he was of the ancient faith.) So we must ascribe the local feeling against Gardiner to jealousy and to the fact that he



SIR ERNEST WILD, K.C., AT THE TIME OF THE PLASNYHALL TRIAL.



had broken the eleventh commandment. The local Don Juan had been found out.

The prosecution called expert witnesses to prove that the fatal letter was written by the accused, but Gardiner stoutly denied this, and Wild was so eloquent on that point that he swayed the jury. Then as regards the india-rubber shoes, they bore no trace of blood nor of having been lately worn. No blood was ever found on Gardiner's clothing, and no blood anywhere in his house except upon the blade of a clasp-knife, and this Gardiner declared was due to eviscerating<sup>1</sup> rabbits.

One of the chief witnesses was a bricklayer, named Burgess, who swore that he had met Gardiner outside his own house at ten o'clock of the night of the murder, had talked with him, and had noticed a light in the bedroom window of Providence House. Naturally, Wild asked Burgess how he could have talked with Gardiner in the road while a hurricane was raging, but Burgess denied there was a storm. This on the face of it was an extraordinary statement to make, and as a result of his subsequent handling by Wild we read that Burgess fainted.

The line that Wild took all through his marvellous speech for the defence was what I have already touched upon. The victim of petty gossip. Both the accused and Mrs. Gardiner would go into the box. There had never been any improper relations with the dead girl. Then having dismissed in turn the question of the note of assignation, the india-

<sup>1</sup> The exact word used was "hulking." See Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*. (A. L.)

rubber shoes and the clasp-knife, he stated that Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner were at a friend's house until half-past one, when they both repaired home, and went straight to bed. The first they heard of the murder was from neighbours when they rose at their usual hour.

Mrs. Gardiner corroborated all this. Moreover she stated that the storm was so terrific that several times she got up to see if the children were frightened, and every time her husband was sound asleep.

Then the defence ascertained that there was another Richmond in the field, and that Rose Harsent had a second string to her bow in the person of a young shopman, named Davis, and love-letters of his were read out in Court that showed him up so badly that Mr. Justice Grantham made some most scathing remarks to him.

Naturally, with such a storm raging, every footstep would sink into the mud, but a witness for the defence alleged that he passed Providence House between four and five on the morning of the murder, and he saw no footsteps at all, and by then it was, of course, broad daylight.

I will deal briefly with the summing-up, which was dead against the accused. For instance, Mr. Justice Grantham discredited the last-mentioned witness's statement entirely, and asked pertinently if anyone would imperil his immortal soul by perjuring away the life of an innocent man, and Morris, a young keeper, had sworn that there were footsteps imbedded in the road from Gardiner's house to Providence House.

To show how far the judge had made up his mind, let me quote these words from his summing-up. "However incredible it might seem for Gardiner to have committed the deed, yet all these facts pointed to the one conclusion that he *must* have done it, and if the jury thought so, it would be their duty to say so." But then Mr. Justice Grantham added, "If, on the other hand, they thought the evidence was not conclusive, it would be their duty to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt."

At 4.15 p.m. the jury retired. At 6.30 p.m. they returned to ask, "what inference they were to draw from the fact that there was no blood upon the prisoner's clothing." The learned judge replied that it was a point in the prisoner's favour, but he reminded them that in other cases no blood had been found upon clothes and yet there was no doubt as to the prisoner's guilt. And then one would have thought that Mr. Justice Grantham had settled Gardiner's doom beyond recall, because he concluded his reply with these baleful words, "If the other evidence was not conclusive, these facts would serve the prisoner; but if this evidence was conclusive, the absence of blood ought not to affect the evidence of guilt."

It seemed to everyone in Court as the jury again retired that there could only be one verdict, and I expect Wild must have feared that even his marvellous defence had failed.

At 8.40 p.m. the jury returned again and the foreman intimated that they could not agree upon their verdict. It then transpired that one jurymen was against the verdict of guilty, and he stood up and told



the judge that he had heard nothing to convince him of Gardiner's guilt. If he had, he would not take his present stand.

There was nothing more to be said, and only one thing to be done—the jury were discharged and after four and a half hours of acutest anguish Gardiner was reconducted to his cell in a state of semi-collapse.

The second trial took place early in the following year (1903)—to be precise, on January 24. The same counsel were engaged, but Mr. Justice Lawrance presided. This second trial created a record in Criminal Trials. In the first trial eleven jurymen were for "Guilty" and one for "Not Guilty." In the second trial the jury disagreed again, but this time they were equally divided. One may well ponder on the workings of the human mind.

Upon the termination of the second trial (*this time the jury were absent two hours*), there was entered a *nolle prosequi*, and after his terrible double ordeal Gardiner left Ipswich Gaol a free man.

If we accept the Rev. Samuel Jones's theory that the death of Rose Harsent was due to an accident, then we must not only rule out the evidence of Mrs. Gardiner that she and her husband spent the evening at a neighbour's, and were there until 1.30 a.m., and also that of the neighbour himself (whose name was Dickinson). Because Mr. Jones's theory is that Gardiner kept the assignation, but on arrival at the kitchen is there met with the terrible spectacle of a burning body and one bathed in blood. Rose Harsent has slipped on the steep stairs, ignited herself with the

lamp, and cut herself with the glass, not from that receptacle, but with the glass of the medicine bottle. The finding of the copy of the *East Anglian Daily Times* under the body Mr. Jones accounts for in this way. That Rose Harsent was carrying the paper tucked in her armpit, her right hand held the lamp, and the left hand the medicine bottle, the left hand drawn across her bosom in order to keep the newspaper tight under her arm. Very well, Gardiner not only realises that Rose Harsent has met with a shocking death, but he is cognisant of the fact that but for the midnight assignation, for which he is responsible, she would now be sleeping peacefully in her room. He loses his head and bolts. There *is* a tremendous lot in Mr. Samuel Jones's theory, but the stumbling-block is the evening passed with Mr. Dickinson. Broken glass is quite capable of killing. But experts say that if she was killed by this agency, it was the medicine bottle that was the lethal agent, and not the lamp. The latter was found in three pieces near the body, and, of course, could account for the ignition, but the curious manner in which the medicine bottle was broken would account for the two wounds. The side that remained unbroken would account for the cutting of the throat, the broken neck would explain the wound on the body. And it is important to emphasise the fact that Mr. Samuel Jones says that it did not occur to anybody at the time to examine either of the wounds for broken glass. His theory cannot be shaken on one ground, and that is that a person falling downstairs in Rose Harsent's immediate surroundings could meet her death as he describes.

There is nothing against it surgically. But I must leave the correct solution of the mystery to the reader. Meanwhile, allow me to narrate an anecdote.

That ripest of comedians, the late Henry Kemble (popularly known to his friends as "Beetle"), was among the supporters of Mr. Samuel Jones's theory. True it was that he was a little hazy over the spelling of Gardiner's name, but he voiced his opinion by explaining plaintively that he could find no evidence against "Mr. Carpenter." Upon it being pointed out to him that the accused man's name was Gardiner, without a second's hesitation he exclaimed, "Oh! A thousand pardons! Both of them extremely honourable occupations."

## VIII

### THE CAMDEN TOWN CASE

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**T**HIS cause célèbre will ever be remarkable not merely for Marshall Hall's successful defence of the accused man, but because the case itself was the means of Marshall's rehabilitation at the Bar. For prior to that he was still in bad odour with regard to the case of Miss Chattell. The scathing remarks of Lord Justice Mathew still rankled. Moreover, he had aroused the justifiable ire of Lord Northcliffe by not putting a curb on that most unruly member, his tongue. In the action brought against the *Daily Mail* he made what the judge (Mathew) stigmatised in the subsequent appeal as "disgraceful imputations" against that newspaper.

In addition to that, in the Goudie bank swindle, he grossly insulted the judge—Lord Mersey—so that when he was briefed in 1906 to defend Robert Wood, on a charge of murdering Emily Dimmock, his stock was running very low indeed. Not only was he suffering a temporary eclipse as regards success at the Bar, but he was also financially embarrassed.

It is satisfactory to recall that afterwards both Marshall Hall (of course) and Lord Northcliffe were fellow-members of the Crimes Club, and the latter was always most enthusiastic in his appreciation of

Marshall's post-prandial oratory at the meetings.<sup>1</sup> I knew Lord Mersey too, but whether the ill-feeling between him and Marshall Hall continued until the demise of the latter I cannot say.

On Thursday morning, September 12, 1906, a cook on one of the Pullman cars of the Midland Railway arrived at his residence, 29 St. Paul's Road, in Camden Town. Shaw was his name and he had been on duty all night, and therefore anxious for a little repose. But for the time being it was to be denied him, for he found the door of the flat where he resided locked. He managed to gain access, and there was confronted with the ghastly spectacle of the girl he was engaged to be married to lying nude on the bed and virtually decapitated. Shaw seems to have been imbued with the desire for Rescue Work, for he knew that his fiancée had been a lady of easy virtue. This girl went by the name of "Phyllis," but her real name was Emily Dimmock, and it is thus that we will continue to designate her. The case was placed in the hands of Detective-Inspector Neal,<sup>2</sup> the same officer who unravelled so mysteriously, nine years later, the mystery of the Brides in the Bath.

Neal started on his enquiries with two facts in his possession. Firstly, that robbery was not the motive of the crime, and that the victim had suffered no pain.

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, Marshall Hall met there frequently another fellow-member in the brilliant and witty "Theo" Mathew, son of Lord Justice Mathew, and they were always very friendly. (A. L.)

<sup>2</sup> Not "Neill." (A. L.)

The medical evidence showed that the woman had been murdered in her sleep in the small hours of the morning, and had been dead some time before her would-be husband had discovered her. Neal at once ascertained that Shaw's confidence in his intended was misplaced, and that she was continuing to lead an immoral life. He interviewed one or two men who had passed the night at Shaw's flat and satisfied himself that they had not been present on the *fatal* night. But in the course of his investigations he ascertained that Emily Dimmock had been seen recently in the company of a certain young man. The couple had been in the habit of frequenting local public-houses and at one of them, called The Rising Sun, they had been seen together on the night of the murder.

We now come to the famous post card. Among other things discovered at 29 St. Paul's Road was a post-card album, of which many of the post cards were lying on the carpet.

But that was without significance until Neal found hidden under brown paper a single post card, and on this post card hinged the whole of the Camden Town Case. For the rifled album betokened a search for a post card, and to hide one under the brown-paper covering of the bottom of a drawer signified a desire to withhold it from someone—presumably the sender. Moreover, a letter partially torn was also discovered in the death chamber, and experts declared that the handwriting of both the letter and the secreted post card was identical. Then a seaman swore that on September 10 he had passed the night with Emily

Dimmock and that the latter had shown him both the post card and the letter, and he had noticed her place the former in a drawer. Let us look still more closely into this wonderful post card. The sender was a bit of a draughtsman, for in one corner was drawn a rising sun and this was preceded by the words, "Phillis (sic) Darling, If it pleases you meet me at 8.15 at the (then comes the drawing). Yours to a cinder, Alice." The post card was addressed to Mrs. B. Shaw to the house where she met her death. The postmark bore the date of September 9 (the Monday before the crime).

Neal at once had the post card photographed and later reproduced in the newspapers. The effect was very far-reaching. Among others who saw the reproduction was a very beautiful girl whose name—Ruby Young—was shortly to resound throughout England. She was not only a lovely girl, but very refined-looking. Her profession was that of an artist's model. Wood, an artist, met her, and they had been lovers for some time, but she was very jealous of him, as she had every cause to be, as he was most certainly not faithful. Naturally she recognised his handwriting as his written communications to *her* were generally embellished with some drawing. It was a fortnight after the murder that Neal published the photograph, and prior to that from the end of July Ruby Young had only seen Wood once as the result of a quarrel. That one occasion was the day after the murder (September 13). Wood, according to the girl's story, seemed agitated, and he put to her the extraordinary request, "Ruby, if any questions are put

to you, will you say that you always saw me on Mondays and Wednesdays ? ”

Wood extracted the promise, though not without some little difficulty. Between September 13 and the publication of the photograph the lovers did not see each other again and the cutting was actually in her room waiting to be posted to him, when who should walk in but Wood himself. Wood then proceeded to explain the position. He said that on September 6 he had met Emily Dimmock in *The Rising Sun*. They had comported together when a vendor of post cards came in. He told her he could draw better, but he bought one, and he then wrote “ something nice ” on it at Emily Dimmock’s request. The “ something nice ” was “ Phillis, Darling,” etc. But he forgot to send it through the post to her (she collected post cards) until September 8 (Sunday). He met Emily Dimmock again in *The Rising Sun* on the following day (September 9), but that was the last time he saw Emily Dimmock alive. He threw himself on Ruby Young’s pity for assistance and invoked their long affection. The girl really cared for Wood and she was fully alive to the necessity of her lover being able to account for his every movement on the fateful Wednesday, and they entered upon a conspiracy, and rehearsed a cock-and-bull story to show that they were in each other’s company on the night of September 11, and so Wood could not have been at that time in Camden Town.

But, alas ! there is only one woman I have ever come across in my sixty odd years whom I would back to keep a secret, and that is the Sphinx. And



to confide in her entails a long and expensive journey.

Ruby Young set the ball rolling by confiding in Charles Wood, Robert's brother. But in this instance I must confess that my sex evinced the chatter-box trait in equal measure. Upon Ruby's acquainting Charles with the situation, she was very much taken aback by her confidant informing her that he knew all about it from Robert himself. Not only that, but Charles Wood had passed it on to his wife. The circle expanded. Ruby took the advice of a man friend, and in telling the story suppressed the names. But the word "post card" was enough, and, of course, the friend guessed the truth, as the whole country was talking of the case. But the fat was fairly in the fire when the friend invited Ruby to meet another friend—a gentleman from Fleet Street. This gentleman then introduced Ruby to Detective-Inspector Neal. The immediate result may be surmised. At her next tryst with Wood, Neal interrupted the interview by arresting the latter. It is impossible to withhold great sympathy from Ruby Young, and I shall have a word or two more to say on this subject a little later on. But, as I have already remarked, she was genuinely fond of Wood, and was undoubtedly the unintentional cause of his undoing, for at their last interview it never dawned upon her that her lover was being shadowed. .

But then it was that, as his counsel, after the case had terminated, used to declare, no man ever tried his hardest to hang himself than Robert Wood. He stupidly signed a declaration attesting to the truth

of the fictitious pact made by him and Ruby Young. But, as I have already stated, Wood and Emily Dimmock had been seen on the night of September 11 (the Wednesday) in *The Rising Sun*. This witness—by name Lambert—now came forward and absolutely quashed the bogus alibi by swearing that on the next day Wood had rung him up on the telephone and implored him to keep silence about his being in the company of the murdered girl.

It was upon this that the terrible examination of Ruby Young took place, and eventually the wretched girl was forced to admit the whole fable of the alibi. Then a drayman "identified" Wood as a man he saw coming out of Emily Dimmock's flat at five o'clock of the morning of September 12. He had seen him plainly by the light of a street lamp. Let us pause for one moment while we consider the value of this evidence. In 1907 (I write open to correction) the Daylight Saving Scheme was not yet in force. Mr. Willett of ever blessed memory was still fighting for that beneficent measure. Therefore, under the old system it would be daylight at five in the morning on September 12. If the street lamps were still alight they would be an hindrance rather than an aid to illumination. Speaking broadly, in those days it was daylight as follows, June 21, 3 a.m., July 21, 3.45 a.m., August 21, 4.30 a.m., *September 21, 5.15 a.m.* Therefore, why drag in a street lamp?

Then a woman friend of Emily Dimmock, named May, recognised the features of Robert Wood.

All these facts decided Neal to oppose bail strenuously, and then it was that the famous Arthur Newton,

who was acting for Wood, realised that he was "up against it." And off he dashed to 3 Temple Gardens, where in those beautiful front chambers which I knew so well, he bearded Marshall Hall and induced him to conduct Robert Wood's defence. One of the greatest anxieties Marshall Hall endured was as regards putting Wood into the box. For a young barrister named Wellesley Orr—and a very rising one too—and who devilled for Marshall Hall, got it into his head that the seaman who had passed the night of September 10 with Emily Dimmock and the murdered woman's friend, May, had concocted a bogus yarn in much the same way as Wood and Ruby had done. Pull devil, pull baker. The cleverness of Orr is apparent because if this could prove to be the fact then the case against Wood would be immensely weakened. But Marshall Hall was always inclined to superstition, and he was for ever saying that hitherto no man tried on a capital charge and who had gone into the box had ever been acquitted. Well, Wood broke the record. These things are always a question of time. For years and years England remained unbeaten by any of the other four countries in the international Rugby tourney at Twickenham. Moreover, in his interviews with Wood in Brixton Prison, Marshall Hall became convinced that either because of the nervous tension that his client was undergoing or from some other cause, Wood's mind had become unhinged. The chief reason for this belief was due to the fact that the accused man spent a large part of his time in drawing flippant sketches illustrating the chief features of the crime, but pre-

dominating was The Rising Sun. Marshall Hall diagnosed this as a cerebral obsession.

Yet Orr eventually prevailed on Hall, and Wood did go into the box.

The Camden Town Case commenced at the New Old Bailey on December 12, 1907. Marshall was opposed by Sir Charles Mathews (afterwards the Public Prosecutor). The judge was Mr. Justice Grantham. Throughout the six days that the trial lasted far and away the least flustered person in Court was the accused. He actually drew a sketch of Ruby Young, and a very talented one too, and doing full justice to her rare beauty. But that was as nothing to what happened on the last day. While the judge was summing up (and dead against him too) Wood was actually sketching *him* until he was stopped by a zealous Court official.

Poor Ruby Young had a very bad time of it. She had to admit immorality and that she was the primary cause of Wood occupying his present position, and she skated upon very thin ice when she admitted in her evidence that Wood had a peculiar and unmistakable walk. For the drayman who saw a man leave Emily Dimmock's flat at five a.m. on the Thursday (September 12) laid stress on this. Marshall Hall gave *him* a bad time of it, though it was an easy ride compared with the dressing-down that the seaman received at his hands. But, of course, the corroboration of the drayman's evidence as to Wood possessing a peculiar gait was a nasty blow for the defence.

It has often been remarked that Marshall Hall let Ruby Young off gently. I think that if we compare

his handling of her evidence and that of other witnesses—notably the drayman and the seaman—that is so. It probably was due in some measure to chivalry. For, as Manzoni says in *I Promessi Sposi*, who shall understand the mentality of a crowd? Just as Mrs. McDougall<sup>1</sup> had been assailed in the streets of Edinburgh, so was Ruby Young in London hooted and mobbed by a raging rabble. On the other hand, Wood had become a popular idol. Ruby Young suffered a terrible ordeal before she went into the box at all. It cannot be pleasant to feel that you have placed your lover in the dock and that police protection stands between you and Lynch Law.

An ex-convict named Crabtree stated that he had more than once kept a brothel at which Wood had been a frequent visitor. Now Marshall Hall gave this witness almost as bad a time as the drayman and the seaman had undergone. But in reality Crabtree's evidence proved in the end to be more helpful to the defence than to the prosecution who had called him, for he swore that various men—one especially—had vowed "to do Emily Dimmock in," but he had never heard Wood utter this threat.

The first great point that Marshall Hall made in his classic speech was that the medical evidence showed that the murdered woman was done to death between 3 and 4 a.m. Very well, among the witnesses called by the prosecution were two who swore to seeing the woman in the company of a man (not the one in the dock) at 12.30 a.m.

<sup>1</sup> Burke and Hare. (A. L.)

H. B. Irving, who sat throughout the trial, would, were he with us to-day, affirm that it would be impossible to depict on the stage<sup>1</sup> a more dramatic scene than what occurred when Marshall Hall electrified the Court by saying, "I call the prisoner, Robert Wood." He proved to be a hopeless witness and a would-be facetious one. The consequence was that Sir Charles Mathews, exercising his right to cross-examine (the reason why Marshall Hall had at first been unwilling to put Wood in the box), found Wood easy prey, especially when he put awkward questions about discovered post cards, torn letters, etc. All Wood could reply was to disclaim ability to offer any explanation.

In his final address, Marshall Hall asked for the motive that could possibly induce Wood to murder Emily Dimmock. There was none. Wood, despite his admitted affairs of gallantry, was a gentle, unassuming person, as many witnesses had testified, chief of whom were his co-employés at the Sand and Blast Manufacturing Co., of Gray's Inn Road. As regards Ruby Young's statement about the peculiar gait, supporting the drayman's evidence, that could be dismissed with contempt as having been said when she was exposed in Court as a woman of loose life. He referred to the bullies who had frequented Crabtree's brothel, and asked if they need look further for the murderer than one of those who had threatened the woman's life in that unsavoury resort. But all

<sup>1</sup> The case seemed to attract members of the theatrical profession to an extraordinary degree. In addition to H. B. Irving, Lady Tree, Lady Dudley, Lily Elsie, and Sir Arthur Pinero, were all in Court. (A. L.)

through his speech those in Court realised that Hall's main idea was to show that murderers are made of sterner stuff than the gentle figure in the dock. In fact, the first question put to Wood by Hall was, "Did you kill Emily Dimmock?" The accused at first replied only by a fatuous grin, and then, compelled to give some sort of verbal answer, exclaimed, "Ridiculous."

Sir Charles Mathews occupied two hours in his final remarks, the gist of which was that the prisoner's demeanour in the dock might well denote cold-bloodedness, and not innocence at all.

I very much doubt if any man tried for murder has been acquitted after such a summing-up as Mr. Justice Grantham delivered in the Wood Case. Even Marshall Hall's wonderful defence was insufficient to keep at bay the increasing feeling of uneasiness that pervaded the Court. So much so that on more than one occasion audible murmurs arose. But towards the end of the peroration Mr. Justice Grantham startled everybody by running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. "I do not think the prosecution have proved their case." The result of this declaration was astounding, and probably unique in a criminal trial. Cheer after cheer was given, and it was taken up by the thousands outside. Many a Court has witnessed the cheering of an acquitted prisoner by those present at the trial, but never before (nor after) has a terse statement by a judge in the prisoner's favour been so received. And those outside the Court must have

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cheered in ignorance of what they were cheering for.

It was 7.45 p.m. when the jury retired. They were back in a quarter of an hour. Marshall Hall said afterwards that he feared the worst. No one else did. I shall never forget that night I was in a West End club when the tape was clicking the summing-up. The crowd round it was a large one. A member of it was offering substantial odds against conviction. As he put it, "In pounds or hundreds if you like." There were no takers.

Readers may recall that in *Sinister Street* Compton Mackenzie brought in the Camden Town Murder.

But when all is said and done, the mystery is still unsolved. Who killed Emily Dimmock?



## IX

### THE GREEN BICYCLE CASE

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IT is often asked what are the qualifications that cause the ordinary policeman to rise from the ranks to the highest position. I suppose that first of all we must suggest "opportunity," but unless it is allied to "astuteness" the policeman will not rise to great heights. I have always thought that the constable who first caught sight of Bella Wright's body was marked out for big things.

On the evening<sup>1</sup> of July 5, 1919, this same body was discovered lying in a pool of blood in a Leicestershire lane just outside Little Stretton. Bella Wright was a young woman—and a factory hand. Upon the nearest constable being summoned that servant of the law made his remarkable discovery, and I say again that it *was* a very remarkable discovery. Not one man in a hundred, either in or out of the police, would have noticed it. Close by the body the policeman discovered upon a gate the clear imprint of the talons of a large bird. These talons were clearly marked on the gate, because they had been steeped in blood. Opening the gate, the policeman proceeded

<sup>1</sup> It was between 9 and 10 p.m., and would of course, under the Daylight Saving Scheme, be still broad daylight. (A. L.)



MR. JUSTICE IVORY



into the adjoining field, and there he perceived a raven lying dead. It should be mentioned that the constable's brain-wave was all the more remarkable, because a doctor who was soon on the spot had at first pronounced the death of the girl to be due to syncopal causes.

But after the finding of the dead raven a closer examination of Bella Wright's person revealed two bullet-like perforations, one larger than the other, the first being in the right side of her head, and the minor wound being in the left cheek.

The last time that Bella Wright was seen alive was when she had left her home, near Little Stretton, on her bicycle. She was accompanied by a man who was also on a bicycle—in his case a green bicycle—and it was noticed that he was wearing a species of waterproof. This fact was noted because it is an unusual garment for any cyclist to wear as it necessarily impedes propulsion, and the proprietor of a bicycle shop, named Cox, established in the town of Leicester, came forward and declared that a green bicycle had been left with him to be repaired, that the owner had called for it on the fatal Saturday, and he rode off, wearing the waterproof as already described. Further particulars furnished were that he was a man in the thirties and of medium height.

Additional enquiries elicited the fact that two little girls had been accosted by a man riding a green bicycle close to where Bella Wright's body was found. According to these children's account, the man had frightened them. But here for a moment I must digress as I cannot see how anybody riding a bicycle

could accost anybody in such a manner as to cause fright. Had he been "pushing" the bicycle then it would be easily comprehensible.

No immediate arrest followed, and as time progressed the crime appeared likely to be added, not only to the list of unravelled mysteries, but to be unproductive of even an accusation.

But on February 20, 1920, a bargee, while plying his calling on the canal that skirts Leicester, fouled the rope with something heavy. This proved on being brought to the bank to be a green bicycle. At once the police enquiries were recommenced, and through the maker the purchaser was proved to be a certain Ronald Light. He was described at the time of his arrest as being a mathematical master in a famous public school, but here again I have never been able to understand how he could be cycling in Leicestershire during term time, and in another part of England to that in which the school was situated. However, be that as it may, Light prejudiced his case very much by first of all stating that he had never owned a green bicycle, and then contradicting the statement with the addition that he had sold it.

Furthermore, the canal when dragged gave up another secret. Close to where the green bicycle was recovered was a revolver case containing cartridges. Some were blank, but some were live. These cartridges were shown to be of the identical make of that found near the body of Bella Wright.

Still more damning evidence against the accused was as regards identification. Cox, the Leicester cycle-dealer, recognised him, and so did the two

little children who complained of being frightened in the lane.

When the trial opened, Marshall Hall was briefed for the defence. It is not a little singular that the same counsel was to fight for the life of Greenwood whose wife had died under suspicious circumstances in less than three weeks before the murder of Bella Wright. 1849 and 1879 have been vintage years in crime, but no two causes célèbres have been so near to each other as those of Bella Wright and Mrs. Greenwood.

It must be very awkward to be called upon to defend anybody on a charge of murder who has been educated at the same school, as I believe was the case with Light and Marshall Hall, though, of course, not at the same time. And this would apply whether one's client were guilty or innocent. But I remember a far more embarrassing situation than this. A governor of a prison had to receive in his charge a man who had been with him at the same college at Oxford. The newcomer plainly showed that he expected the old 'Varsity days to recommence. It was the governor's daughter who told me the story at a dinner-party. She concluded by saying, "So to get out of it, father did such a clever thing. He had him transferred to another prison."

Marshall Hall's great trouble with Light was that his statements were unveracious. But the great advocate probably secured his client's acquittal owing to his acquaintance with the use of firearms. The line he took was that it was impossible for the dead

girl to have been shot at a distance of a yard or so by the revolver found in Light's possession. Marshall Hall even went to the length of experimenting himself, and so affording ocular demonstration in support of his argument. Light was an ex-officer of the Sappers and of the H.A.C. and so was quite *au fait* with the handling of a revolver. Another very strong point in the defence was an entire absence of motive. Try as hard as they could the Crown could not suggest one, and naturally Marshall Hall made the most of it. A man does not murder a poor girl when he is ignorant even of her name, and the dead woman's uncle declared that Bella had told him that the man she was riding with was an utter stranger to her. On the other hand, the uncle swore that he had heard the stranger address his niece as "Bella." Marshall Hall suggested it was "Hello" that he heard, but this the uncle would not admit.

But in his cross-examination of the doctor and the gunsmith Marshall Hall scored heavily. He wrung admissions from both of them that if Bella Wright had been shot at close range with the revolver found to be the property of Ronald Vivian Light (to give him his full name) the result would be that the victim's head would have been blown right off. Not only that, but the bullet found only six yards from the dead girl would have travelled ever so much farther had it been fired at close quarters. The whole trend of the defence was to show that the bullet found in the road was not the cause of the tragedy, and that the girl's death was purely accidental. Someone might have been out rook-shooting, or practising

shooting, and a stray bullet might have hit the girl. It was even suggested that the dead raven had not departed this life owing to having gorged himself with the dead girl's blood, but had been struck by a bullet, and the bullet had rebounded or ricocheted on to Bella Wright.

I have said that Marshall Hall was very nervous about his client's falsehoods being unmasked, but after great consideration he decided to put him into the witness-box when the Prosecution had finished.

Light admitted his ownership of the green bicycle, the cartridges, and the revolver-case, and that his previous denial was a tissue of lies. He said that he had never set eyes on the girl before that evening, when she asked him for the loan of a spanner. He had come upon her when her bicycle was lying against a bank and she was dismounted. Matters being put right, they rode together as far as her uncle's house. There she told him that she would not be long, but he rode on towards Leicester. Almost immediately afterwards he punctured a tyre, and on the principle of being as well hanged for a sheep as a lamb (he was already late for his evening meal) he went back by a by-path expecting to cut off the girl. Instead of that he saw her only just coming out of her uncle's house. He never called her "Bella" in his life. He had no idea what her Christian name was any more than he was aware of her surname. They rode together as far as Little Stretton, where the road bifurcates. He took the right road to Leicester, she took the left road. He pointed out to her that the right road led to Leicester, but she replied she had no desire to go



to Leicester, and they rode off in different directions. That was the first and the last time that he ever saw her.

Light then added that lack of moral courage prevented him going to the police, and that he had an aged mother to whom he was devoted. It was on her account that he had thrown not only the green bicycle, and the revolver-case, but even the clothes that he had worn, into the canal.

One of the great points made by Marshall Hall was his annihilation of the evidence of the two children who had been frightened by a man on a green bicycle in a lane. Clever cross-examination proved the whole statement to be an utter fabrication. The green bicycle had been so talked about that they had invented the statement. An ugly feature of the case was that one of the children stated that when they told the story of the rencontre, the police suggested that it was on July 5 that it happened. Let us not forget that a man's life is at stake. In these cases of pure imagination I always think of Mademoiselle de la Roncière, who imagined that a young cavalry officer at St. Cyr and the son of a distinguished general, had forced his way into her room, and had attempted to outrage her. The young officer was dismissed the Army with ignominy. It was not until quite late in life that his good name was cleared and the *amende honorable* was forthcoming. It was conclusively proved that he had never even been near the woman's house. Yes, feminine hysteria, besides being boring beyond measure, has much to answer for.

Marshall Hall dwelt upon the fact that probably

the real reason why Light went back to the girl was that she was good-looking. Light was already late for his supper, and how many men in his place would not have returned to her? It was not suggested by the prosecution that the girl had been violated, because the medical evidence showed that there was not a trace of it. He again bantered the prosecution on their inability to provide a motive, and he even went so far as to say that there was considerable doubt as to her being murdered at all. No one would suggest that the girl had been shot because she rejected the man's advances. The shooting would come after the assault. But of the latter, he repeated, there was no trace, nor of any struggle. Towards the end of his peroration as an excuse for Light's moral cowardice he reminded the Court that he had done very well in the war until he had been invalided out of the Army with shell-shock.

In his summing-up, the judge (Mr. Justice Horridge) took the line that there was a complete absence of motive, but he severely criticised the false statements and *louche* behaviour of the accused. On the whole, the summing-up constituted an exact equipoise.

Light obviously suffered acutely during the absence of the jury, and there was a repercussion of the Peasenhall Mystery, in that they returned before delivering their verdict, but upon this occasion it was the judge who sent for them to ask if there was any likelihood of agreement. I did not know that it was the practice to do this, and in any case the absence of the jury was not nearly so prolonged as in scores of other cases one can remember, without the judge requesting their

return for the purpose of enquiry as to the possibility of agreement. In the Green Bicycle Case, when the jury were recalled, they had only been absent a little over three hours. In response to the judge's query the foreman replied that they could return a verdict if they were granted another quarter of an hour. As a matter of history, and mercifully for the accused, they returned this time in two or three minutes, the exact hour being 7.45 p.m.

By this time Light had reached the limit of his endurance, and upon the verdict of "Not Guilty" he collapsed and never heard the cheering that broke forth both in the Court and outside, the former to be sternly repressed, the latter to be prolonged and increasing in force.

Light proved most grateful afterwards to Marshall Hall, and the latter told him to do all he could for his invalid and aged mother. And here I must interpolate that Light had always been a most dutiful and affectionate son to her.

Of all his famous cases Marshall Hall always considered that the Green Bicycle Case was his greatest triumph, ranking it even before the Camden Town Case, and, after all, who should know better than he? But all the same, who killed Bella Wright?

## X

### THE MURDER OF THOMAS WELDON ANDERSON, THE ACTOR

**A**LTHOUGH it actually occurred before the war this strange case to us seems as though it had happened but yesterday. An unsatisfactory case, if ever there was one, from the public point of view. Here is a man done to death in the heart of London, and yet never even an arrest follows. Let me recall the facts briefly.

In 1910 there resided at No. 17 Prince of Wales Road, Battersea, a middle-aged actor. On the stage he was known as Atherstone, in private life as Anderson, and his two front names on and off the stage were Thomas Weldon. For the purposes of the story we will call him by his real name and not by his stage nomenclature, though what I have to set forth is a most lurid drama.

Anderson was and had been for some time a grass widower, that is to say, he lived apart from his wife. Always a most unsatisfactory arrangement, and especially for the woman a most anomalous position. In this instance the result of the marriage was two sons, and by all accounts Anderson was very fond of both of them.

Perhaps it will be necessary to offer a slight explanation of the word "resided," of which I made use a few lines previously. I should have qualified this statement by adding the words "when in London." One of the almost inevitable results of a man living apart from his wife had taken place in this case. Anderson years before had formed a liaison with a lady who was likewise a member of the theatrical profession. Commencing as an actress, she had early discovered that besides learning she could instruct, and accordingly she had joined the staff of a School of Dramatic Art.

During the years of their intercourse, terrible quarrels at times took place between the couple, and the lady would in all probability have broken with him, but she was very fond of the two boys, and as it were mothered them.

The quarrels between Anderson and Miss X (for so I will call the lady) had become more frequent in the three or four months that preceded the crime, and at all times of an extremely jealous disposition the man had latterly become periodically almost maniacal, and had been very difficult to live with. It came out during the enquiry that some months before the tragedy he had been knocked down by a motor while he was crossing the road, and that this accident had resulted in severe concussion. Hence the reason of the fits of jealousy being so augmented.

At the time of the murder, July 16, 1910, Anderson was not actually resident in the flat. That is to say, he was not on tour, but shortly before he had stamped out of the flat, beside himself with fury. This was the

culmination of a series of frightful scenes. It really would seem as if at this juncture Anderson was not quite sane, because such dimensions did his jealousy assume that he actually stipulated that Miss X should confine herself to teaching women only at the Dramatic School. But what really was the cause of the actor's departure was his accusation that Miss X had been faithless to him at the Battersea flat. Yet between the final rupture and the fatal night both Anderson and his sons visited Miss X. Nay more, on the night itself the elder son, Thomas, supped with her. Hardly had they taken their seats at table when they were startled by hearing two pistol shots, almost simultaneously, and fired just outside the building at the back. Now, the flats in Prince of Wales Road, Battersea, can be entered in two ways. Firstly, by the ordinary staircase leading from the front door, secondly by an iron staircase at the back which communicated with the apology for a garden. This staircase was to all intents and purposes a fire-escape.

Upon hearing the two shots, young Anderson and his hostess darted towards the iron staircase and saw a man slithering over the wall adjoining the next house, and then he disappeared.

Now these two shots were heard by several people besides Thomas Anderson and Miss X. A cook out walking not only heard them, but saw a man drop from a wall and scud towards the river. This wall adjoined 17 Prince of Wales Road and connected the latter with another block of flats called Cambridge House. A tradesman who was walking in the same road

as the cook (Rosenau Road) also heard the shots, but he did not see the man drop from the wall, but what he did see was a young man running towards him as hard as he could, pass him, and proceed in the direction of the river. Lastly, a third man, also in the road, heard the shots and, like the cook, saw a man drop from the wall and tear towards the river. So far so good. But at the inquest these three witnesses all differed in essentials. The last-mentioned, a chauffeur named Noice, declared the fugitive to be hatless. The tradesman said that he was wearing a peaked cloth cap, and the cook said that he had on a billycock. Subsequently, Noice said that possibly he might have been wearing a cap, but that he was running at tremendous speed.

As a matter of fact, two further witnesses came forward who saw the man drop from the wall ; they were uncertain as to his headgear, but all five agreed as to his youth and agility. As regards the build of the fugitive, all five attested that he was a little man, but his height was stated with that delightful marginal inaccuracy with which we talk of the fortunes of rich men. Just as a rich man is said by A to be worth £100,000, so by B he is stated to be worth double the amount. In this instance the cook described the mysterious visitor as five feet three inches in height, Noice declared him to be three inches taller. Even five feet six inches is short stature for a man. Five feet three inches is tiny.

About a quarter of an hour after the firing of the shots Miss X and Thomas Anderson were visited by a police officer named Buckley, who asked per-

mission to examine the premises as he had been summoned to investigate. Young Anderson and the officer went on to the iron staircase at the back and examined the wall. On their return the son noticed something black lying under the staircase, huddled against the flat underneath, but, of course, in the backyard.

Now I must here explain that the flat underneath was at the time untenanted. Miss X had resided at 17 Prince of Wales Road for eight years altogether. From 1902-1906 she had occupied the ground-floor flat, and for the last four years (1906-1910) she had occupied her present flat. The reason of her move was because of an epidemic of burglaries in the neighbourhood, and she naturally felt more secure in her present surroundings. In fact the ground-floor flat had been burgled in 1906. It is most important to bear this in mind in view of what transpired after the tragedy, as, of course, burglary was put forward as the motive of the crime, or I should say one of the three explanations, because two others have been suggested. I will come to them presently.

Directly Buckley's attention was drawn to the huddled heap under the staircase he procured a lamp from Miss X's flat, descended the iron stairs and discovered a man breathing heavily, and bleeding profusely from two bullet wounds in the face. It is of the utmost importance also to note here that young Anderson was asked by Buckley if he had ever seen the man before (the officer, of course, holding the lamp close to the wounded man), and Thomas Anderson, instead of at once recognising his father,



declared him to be an utter stranger to him. A doctor was procured as soon as possible and he was on the spot very quickly, for as it happened he was at home, and lived in Cambridge Road, Cambridge House being, of course, in that thoroughfare. This doctor, by name Merrett, was soon joined by Kempster, the surgeon attached to the local police station, but despite all their united medical skill Anderson passed away about an hour and a quarter after the firing of the two shots—i.e. at about a quarter past ten.

Then commenced a most interesting series of discoveries, the first of which was that the dead man was armed, and not only that but armed in a most unusual way. We have all read of sandbagging and "crimping" drunken sailors, but these generally make a complete recovery, and are none the worse for the experience except in pocket. But Anderson carried a more lethal weapon, and that was a coil of insulated electric cable. This was looped to the wrist like a policeman's truncheon, was a foot and a half long, and was concealed in a most curious manner, for it was covered with brown paper and tied with string, so that it had all the appearance of an innocent-looking parcel. Now, what was Anderson doing in that empty flat? For at once the police discovered that he had been very recently in it. On the mantelpiece, also wrapped up in brown paper, were the dead man's boots. When he was murdered he was wearing a pair of felt slippers. Noiseless in themselves, but useless for hasty movement. And why should Anderson have come to the buildings

stealthily? The son attested that not only did his father know that he was to sup with Miss X that night, but his father had told him that "he should very probably drop in too." Therefore, why should he go to the unoccupied downstairs flat? The supposition that he intended to bludgeon Miss X *à la* Bill Sikes and Nancy, may be dismissed as being what Euclid would call absurd. He had always encouraged the friendship of both his sons with Miss X and all who knew Anderson vouch for the fact that despite his fits of passion, he always recognised her goodness to his boys. Besides, if he had gone to the flat upon murder intent, who was the *deus ex machina* who, springing from nowhere, a Lohengrin of the night, the protector of any woman in danger of being murdered, puts "paid" to the caller's account by plugging a couple of bullets in him?

Among other things found in the dead man's pockets were his professional visiting cards bearing the name of T. W. Atherstone. A cordon of police had surrounded the buildings and upon young Anderson attempting to pass through it he was stopped by the Detective-Inspector and told that nobody must pass. Young Anderson pointed out that he had no latch-key and would be locked out if he did not soon return to his lodgings, but the police were adamant. Upon his return from the front door to Miss X's flat Thomas Anderson was accompanied by the Inspector and shown one of the visiting cards, He at once identified it, *and that was how he first learnt that the murdered man was his own father.*

I suppose in these cases no stone must be left

unturned, but on reviewing the facts it appears almost incredible that young Anderson "had to go through it." Those witnesses who had seen the man slither from the wall were asked if he resembled Thomas Anderson. In view of young Anderson's physique and the fugitive being undersized, we do not marvel that the witnesses emphatically decided in Thomas's favour.

And then there is the statement of Miss X. From the time that young Anderson entered her flat at 8.30 p.m. until the two shots were fired outside, he never left her presence for a moment.

Again, the footprints of the "wallflower" were clearly defined, and they in no way resembled the son's. Neither did they compare with the pair of boots found in the empty flat.

But what perhaps gives to think the most furiously is an entry in the elder Anderson's diary: "If he had kept away from her, if he had broken from the spell of her fascination and remained out of reach, this would never have happened. He has no one to thank but himself. We all reap as we have sown."

This entry clearly proves that the elder Anderson was under the impression that he had a rival in the affections of Miss X, and the police theory was that he went to the empty flat that night to dispose of the rivalry once and for all with the insulated wire. But who was the rival? We must believe Miss X that he was non-existent, especially as no other man ever came under suspicion, and with such searching police enquiries as were instituted, any other man

who had been on familiar terms with the actress in the flat must have been known to, and identified by, somebody.

And I must not omit one most important detail. Careful examination and experiments proved that when Thomas Weldon Anderson was killed, the assassin had fired on a level with Anderson's face, and not down at him from the iron staircase.

The more one puzzles over the case the more insoluble the mystery appears. The theory of burglary may be ruled out. One does not burgle an empty flat. If Miss X were faithful to Anderson, whom was there to kill with the insulated wire? If (and this is a third theory) the fugitive wanted to kill Anderson, and Miss X did not enter into the case, the motive being a private grudge, why did he elect to kill him in the immediate neighbourhood of an unoccupied flat? Once more, why was Anderson there, and armed? How did the assassin know that his victim would be there? If he had wanted to kill the actor, there must have been plenty of easier opportunities without all that paraphernalia. Lastly, we shall never know now the identity of the murderer. But I for one confess that even if he were caught and brought to justice, that happening would be secondary in interest to me compared with the *motive* of the murder. And if he never divulged that, the trial and conviction would leave me cold. Perhaps, even if the grave has closed over the assassin, some reader may solve the problem, on a long winter evening, or when undertaking an irksome railway journey. It is far more intriguing than any crossword puzzle. At least we

think so. As a rule in these undiscovered murder cases we have our own private suspicions. But I defy anybody to solve the riddle of the shooting of Thomas Weldon Anderson, or as it afterwards became known, the Battersea Flat Mystery.

**PART III**  
**GREAT DETECTIVE FEATS**



# I

## VOIRBO

THE case of Voirbo is always cited as being the supreme instance of detective skill in the annals of crime, and to prove how absorbing the study is the great young M. Macé devoted a whole book to it, which he called *Mon Premier Crime*. There is not a dull page in it. Therefore it is not too easy a task to compress the salient points into so small a space as I have at my disposal, and when I have presented it there may be many who will say, "We admit Macé's genius, but he has six to four the best of it in that in France the accused is guilty until he is proved innocent; in other words, French is the converse of English law." Moreover, it may be urged that Third Degree methods are adopted in France, as they are in America. There were no Third Degree methods in the Voirbo Case, whatever the French police have had recourse to in other matters. And incidentally, even if this form of examination obtains in America, we cannot congratulate the police of the United States on the results, for a more inept force has never existed in any country that calls itself civilised. Not to put too fine a point upon it, they are at the moment the laughing-stock of the rest of the world. But let us to our muttons.



Upon the afternoon of January 26, 1869, a gendarme named Ringué was passing an estaminet in the Rue Princesse in Paris. The proprietor was known to him personally, and he was in the habit of greeting him, but upon this occasion directly Lampon (for that was his name) caught sight of Ringué, he dragged him inside and excitedly told him how he had just fished up a human leg from his well. This well was by the wine cellar, and a small window in the latter opened about six feet from the water. As he had noticed a peculiar taste about the water recently, Lampon had looked through the open window to see if anything could possibly have fallen in, and he beheld a parcel. Upon retrieving this parcel he had opened it in the cellar, and there he had found a human leg, so far gone that he was for the moment overcome by the stench.

Ringué took all this as read; that is to say, he tore off to the newly-appointed Commissary of the district, without sampling the stench himself. The new Commissary was a very young man for the post, but as a result of Ringué's errand his name was destined to be enrolled upon the imperishable scroll of fame. It was M. Gustave Macé.

Upon Macé's arrival at the well, he found it to be unusually deep, nearer sixty than fifty feet. This well was plainly visible from the kitchen on the ground-floor, and in fact it was always used for the water supply from the kitchen, but for closer examination the cellar-window opening just above the level of the water was more practicable.

M. Macé at once saw that Lampon had uncon-

sciously nullified the first chance of any clue as he had cut the cord fastening the parcel and so destroyed the character of the knots.

But M. Macé immediately espied a second parcel floating on the surface, and this *he* retrieved, but not with the iron hook that the proprietor had used to fish out the first, but he acted much more circumspectly. He borrowed from the kitchen a ~~large~~, double-handled metal basin, and this he lowered to one side of the parcel, then skilfully manipulated it underneath, and so hoisted it up.

Like the first parcel the cover was made of black glazed calico; it was sewn with thread of the same hue down the centre, but the ends were not sewn, but knotted. The two parcels were practically uniform in size, that is to say each strip of calico was about a yard square. A piece of ordinary cloth was inside the calico, and inside this was also a human leg. But this second leg was wrapped in part of a brown cotton stocking and part of a sock, and on the latter Macé's quick eye perceived a mark.

Here it is : (In red cotton) + B +.

I will here pause to enquire what any of us would have done in Macé's place. This was his one and only clue. Moreover, he had to await medical opinion as to whether the legs were a pair, and not only that, one might be a man's, the other a woman's. The medical experts, however, officially declared the legs to be a pair, and to have belonged to a woman. They also decided that they had been fully a month in the well.

Now, by a coincidence it so happened that on

December 22 Ringué had been on duty near the Rue Princesse with a fellow-policeman, named Champy, for in Paris the night-police patrol in couples and never singly. The two policemen noticed a bearded man wearing a tall hat and heavily laden. Under one arm he carried a large parcel and under the other a hamper. They challenged the stranger, who proved to be short, but very thick-set—*trapu* is the correct word. They asked him what his business was at that hour of the morning, *chargé comme un mulet Espagnol*. At first the man was silent, but upon being invited to come to Le Poste he quickly recovered himself and said that he lived quite close to there in the Rue Princesse and that he was only about so late because, in coming from Mantes, the train had been delayed and when he arrived at the station not a cab was to be seen. And then the stranger laid the parcel on the pavement and said to Ringué, "Just feel those hams, or, better still, smell them." And meanwhile Champy had opened the hamper and found it contained mostly farm produce like butter, honey, and wheat cakes. Upon this the two gendarmes allowed him to continue his way unmolested, the more especially as, tied to the hamper, was a railway label, "Compagnie du Chemin de Fer de l'Est."

About ten days after this incident a human thigh-bone had been discovered lying in the gutter in the Rue Jacob.

Then, within a week of this, large pieces of chopped-up human flesh had been found on the banks and in the waters of the Seine and the Saint Martin Canal.

Then a resident on the Quai Valmy came forward and said that on the very early morning of December 20, a man who answered the description of the stranger of Mantes was remarked by him to be feeding something in the Seine, and out of curiosity he approached him and asked what he was doing. In reply he was told by the stranger that he was ground-baiting, as he was a very keen angler, ~~and~~ all the time the stranger kept throwing in what he took to be pieces of meat.

So here we are with M. Macé looking for a missing woman and puzzling whether the legs, the thigh-bone, and the morsels of ground-bait have at some previous time all belonged to her. To show the result of the medical expert evidence, Macé sifted out the whole of the eighty-four women reported as missing, narrowed them down to fourteen, then to three, a widow, a married woman, and a girl, only to find the three latter alive and *kicking*.<sup>1</sup> And then after all this time M. Tardieu, the greatest authority on medical jurisprudence in France, declared that all three discoveries were not only part of the same human being, but that that same human being was a *man*. Parenthetically, it is well known that the old custodian of the Morgue, who had been there most of his life, from the first declared that the remains were male.

So M. Macé has to start anew. But he learns two fresh facts from M. Tardieu. The deceased was an old man. The body was dismembered with a cleaver. But there was a third fact which Macé discovered for

<sup>1</sup> See *Mon Premier Crime*. (A. L.)

himself. The two parcels found in the well had been sewn up by a tailor. But no tailors worked at the house in the Rue Princesse; moreover, many people had access to the well, and there was a special door that gave access to it without the concierge being required. But M. Macé at length discovered that a seamstress, named Mademoiselle Gaufe, had lived in the Rue Princesse, and had worked for many tailors, that one used to carry water from the well up to her, and that his name was Voirbo. Macé soon traced the seamstress, who had since gone on the stage. The result of his interrogation of her was that Voirbo used to come and see Mademoiselle Gaufe at her café chantant, and was generally accompanied by a man older than himself, whom she knew only as Désiré; she did not know his surname. The last time she saw them was on December 13, when they were accompanied by an old woman named Bodasse, who was introduced to her as Désiré's aunt, and who she was afterwards told was a bandage-maker.

Armed with this information, M. Macé paid a call upon Madame Bodasse and after a little friendly chat he whisked her off in a cab to the Morgue. There the articles of clothing found round the legs retrieved from the well were shown to her, for at the Morgue all such details are most carefully classified and kept. The result of this move on the part of the great detective must have surpassed his wildest expectations. The moment Madame Bodasse was shown the + B +, she exclaimed, "I did that. That's my nephew Désiré's," and she laid her finger on the

red cotton marking. Later on Madame Bodasse was to prove even more useful in the elucidation of the mystery, for M. Tardieu had discovered that upon one of the legs was a scar which had been caused recently and had barely healed. She recognised not only the scar, but accounted for it by the fact that her nephew had fallen upon a broken bottle.

So then M. Macé has established the identity of the murdered man, there now remains to discover who killed Désiré Bodasse.

Still accompanied by the aunt, M. Macé called at 50 Rue Dauphine, her nephew's residence. They were unable to gain admittance, but the concierge said there was nothing in that as the old man hardly ever showed up, and letters were always pushed under his door. Then she took M. Macé's breath away by informing him that she knew that he was there last night as she saw a light burning in his room, and *also she had seen him talking to someone in the street that morning. She believed he was in at the present time.* Macé's next move was to call on Voirbo. He found that he had changed his address, but from his old servant he learned a good deal. Only a very short time before, Voirbo had married a girl with a dot; in order to do this he had attempted unsuccessfully to borrow 10,000 francs from his inseparable friend, Désiré Bodasse. For, so as to bring about the marriage, it was necessary for Voirbo to let the girl's family see the colour of *his* money. However, the servant continued to narrate how Voirbo had got money from somewhere, and presumably he had quarrelled

with Désiré, owing to the latter's refusal to lend the money, for old Bodasse never attended the marriage.

The great impasse that met Macé was the habitation of 50 Rue Dauphine. The motive of the murder was now as plain as a pikestaff, but if Désiré Bodasse was in the land of the living he was obviously not murdered. On the previous occasion Macé had left a note under the door. Upon his second visit, being again unable to procure admission, the detective had the door burst open, and the first thing that he saw was his letter lying unopened upon the floor. Dust was on the furniture. The bed had not been slept in. One of the most wonderful pieces of deduction in the elucidation of the crime was this. Macé gauged that in two candlesticks fifteen candles had been burnt. Because on the mantelpiece were two boxes, each had contained eight candles. One was empty, one held one candle. In the two candlesticks new candles had been affixed to the wicks of the others. Now one candle of this size would burn for three hours. Therefore there had been a light in the room on fifteen occasions for three hours at a time. The most searching re-examination of the concierge subsequently proved to Macé beyond doubt that since the first suspicious circumstances (i.e. the meeting between the stranger and Ringué and Champy), from 8 p.m.-11 p.m. a light had burnt in Bodasse's rooms upon fifteen occasions. But who was burning it? And the concierge had declared that she had seen Bodasse alive in the street upon the morning of the day of Macé's first visit. Then, too, Bodasse

possessed a walk peculiar to himself in that he allowed his stick to trail behind him, and that had been quite audible to the concierge upon these fifteen occasions. One thing especially Macé's keen eye noted. *The day-clock was ticking.* A careful examination of a secret hiding-place, which Madame Bodasse believed to have been known only to her nephew and herself, revealed that every security and article of value had been removed. But to show how thorough in his methods Macé was he discovered a silver watch of the "turnip" variety hanging on the wall—a watch of no intrinsic value. But he opened it and discovered a pink paper giving the numbers of 1861 Italian Stock—payable to bearer. Here was a find. Remembering how Voirbo had recently changed his address upon embarking on matrimony, he hurried to the proprietor of the former apartment and found that the rent had been paid with an Italian stock share corresponding to one in the list found in the case of the watch. Then Voirbo's servant stated that on December 17, on arriving at the Rue Mazarin early in the morning as usual, she found Voirbo not only up and dressed, but also saw that the room had been turned out and cleaned. Even the tiles had been washed, as some were glistening. Voirbo explained this by saying that some clothes that had been sent to him for tailoring repairs were so saturated in paraffin that he could not get the smell out of the room.

A great deal might be written upon what immediately follows, and in fact M. Macé tells the story at length, but the gist of it is this: Macé decided to



post two plain-clothes' men in Bodasse's apartment in the Rue Dauphine and to report on Voirbo's movements, but these men were not Macé's own men, and on their behalf it may be urged that they did not know exactly what they were there for ; what they did know was that Voirbo was a secret political agent of the police. And it was so. He combined that with his tailoring business. And when Ringué and Champy had met Voirbo with the hamper and the hams in the early morning of December 23, and had spoken of taking him to Le Poste, Voirbo whispered something cryptic to them, presumably a secret password, and upon that they let him go, with the remark, " Why didn't you say so before ? " So here, knowing Voirbo's second occupation, one of the two policemen blurted out to him that they had been put there by Macé, little dreaming that the detective's idea was to arrest Voirbo in Bodasse's apartments.

After considerable deliberation, consequent upon his temporary disappointment, Macé decided to send for Voirbo to attend at his office. Voirbo dared not disobey, but he did not prejudice Macé in his favour when he informed him that he would have come upon his own initiative ages ago, had he not been given to understand that M. Macé was about to be relieved of his appointment almost immediately, owing to his youth and inexperience. He professed himself as being *désolé* at his friend's disappearance, but offered to assist Macé in tracing his murderer. Macé accompanied Voirbo to many secret political meetings, both of them disguised, Voirbo as a Red

Republican<sup>1</sup> orator. Nay, more, in a low den he introduced Macé to a drunken desperado named Rifer, and intimated that he was sure that he had done away with Bodasse. But in his official capacity Macé summoned Rifer and some of his gang to his office and soon convinced himself that they could not have been concerned in the murder. Meanwhile, Voirbo plied Rifer so assiduously with bad ~~bandy~~ <sup>bandy</sup> that he soon developed delirium tremens and died in that condition. Triumphantly, Voirbo reported his demise to Macé and said that Rifer had cheated the guillotine. So convinced now was Macé of Voirbo's guilt that he determined to arrest him next time he summoned him to his office. But before he could arrange for this he was amazed to find Voirbo awaiting him there upon his arrival early next morning. *Que faire ?* The two were alone together at that hour. So Macé, under pretence of answering an urgent letter, wrote full instructions to his secretary and took the communication into the outer office, where he left it in a prominent position. When the secretary arrived at his usual time he proceeded to carry out the instructions down to the minutest detail. Police were posted, as ordered, outside. Upon the ringing of a bell the messenger was to remove the fire-irons. Then, upon a pretext the secretary was to enter and remain in the room. Upon the second ringing of the bell two police officers were to enter the office and remain there.

Presently Voirbo took out a pocket-book with the

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that Napoleon III did not fall until the year following. (A. L.)

idea of furnishing Macé with the address of one of the Rifer gang, but accidentally he dropped a card. Macé's hawk-like eye noted it was that of a steamship company. Obviously, there was not a moment to lose. At a given sign, the three other men in the room closed on Voirbo. The pocket-book was carefully examined and there was a passage ticket to America on a ship sailing from Havre that afternoon, made out in the name of Saba.

Upon Voirbo's removal to prison, Macé was at leisure to thoroughly examine Voirbo's dwelling-place. One feels very sorry for Voirbo's wretched wife, who was all unconscious of her husband's true character. She had brought her husband 15,000 francs dowry in stock, payable to bearer. These were kept in a box, of which her husband held the key. Upon Macé forcing the box, it was found to be empty. There was no sign, either, of the 10,000 francs in Italian securities brought as his share by Voirbo. Otherwise, nothing incriminating was found in the living apartments. But in the workroom, in a drawer, newspaper cuttings were found, dealing with famous murders in which dismemberment played the chief part. Also terrible weapons, if employed nefariously, flat-irons, a loaded mallet, a chopper, and two pairs of enormous shears, recently sharpened. M. Macé also discovered more railway labels "*Compagnie du Chemin de Fer de l'Est*," a piece of cord similar to that tied round the parcels found in the wall, and also something that baffled him completely, viz. an old spoon, made of iron and used for holding molten lead.

Then M. Macé passed down to the wine cellar. But for two casks, it was empty. But the detective noticed that the bung of one of them protruded more than the other, and also that a piece of string was attached to it. He pulled out the bung and with it the string, and at the very end was a tin. Prising the last-named open, Macé found the whole of the missing Italian securities except the one with which Voirbo had paid his rent.

It is a matter of conjecture whether Voirbo would have returned that afternoon, had he been a free man, and taken those securities with him on to the boat. He might have taken only his wife's 15,000 francs, and in time communicated to her the whereabouts of the Italian securities—when he judged the hue and cry had died down. We may give him the benefit of the doubt.

The one missing link now in Macé's evidence was the proof of dismemberment by Voirbo of Bodasse. Accordingly, he decided to examine thoroughly Voirbo's old apartments in the Rue Mazarin. Perhaps he would be even more fortunate than he had been in the Rue Lamartine. For his own reasons he had Voirbo brought there. The rooms were now occupied, but with the assistance of the concierge the main room was arranged as it was in Voirbo's time. In the centre of the room had been a large, round table. The bed was in an alcove. M. Macé remarked that the floor, which was tiled, sloped from the table towards the bed. And there remained in his mind the story of Voirbo's early rising on December 17, and the "glistening tiles." So Macé proceeded to

demonstrate what is generally regarded as the greatest *coup* in detective work. He said that supposing anybody had been dismembered in that room it could only have been done on the large centre table, because of the limited space. And as there was a noticeable slope in the floor, the blood would flow in that direction. "Now I am going to pretend that this jug contains blood and not water." (At these words Voirbo, who had been quite calm, became ashen pale and trembled convulsively.) Suiting the action to the word, Macé picked up a jug of water from the wash-stand and poured it from the table. Two large pools collected under the bed. These two patches were then completely dried and the tiles carefully taken up. Beneath was found a quantity of dried blood, afterwards proved to be human. Voirbo, in his calculations, had not allowed for the blood percolating through the interstices and then coagulating.

Voirbo thereupon—in his former apartment—made a full confession. Bodasse refused to lend the 10,000 francs for the dowry. Voirbo invited him to come and see him, and the invitation was accepted. The murderer, as he thought, killed his victim with one blow from a flat-iron, but, finding him still breathing, he bound him to a chair and decapitated him, commencing from the throat.

It is not quite accurate to say that Voirbo confessed everything at first. For a long time he refused to say what he did with the head. Then at length he told Macé that he had poured molten lead into it

through the mouth and the ears and then, when it was quite heavy, he had thrown it into the Seine.

So at last Macé discovered the meaning of that old iron spoon that he had found in Voirbo's rooms in the Rue Lamartine.

Voirbo was incarcerated in Mazas prison, and on his way there he nearly succeeded in escaping, and, in view of what follows, I have little doubt that the attempt was connived at. For Voirbo cheated the guillotine. Nay, he was never even brought to trial. On March 4 he was handed a loaf of bread. I think it must have been "significantly," for, on pulling it asunder, he discovered, concealed in it, a razor. Needless to say that he took the hint. As I have said, he was a political agent, and probably the authorities did not wish him to open his mouth. But tailor, political agent, and atrocious assassin, he was also a bigamist. He confessed to Macé that when he had recently married he had a wife living in New York—an Englishwoman—and that he was on the point of rejoining her when he was arrested. He had had ample time to escape. It was entirely his own fault.

There is one aspect of this remarkable case that gives food for thought. The concierge in the Rue Dauphine stated that she had heard Bodasse moving about his room long after his assassination. That delusion is, of course, easily accounted for by Voirbo's impersonation of him. But the concierge also said that she had seen Bodasse "that very morning," talking in the street "by Le Passage du Commerce." Clearly a case of mistaken identity, and one which might have been very far-reaching, and another proof

of the fallibility of circumstantial evidence. It must have been a facer for any detective. But even this terse epitome of a whole volume will, I hope, show that in his profession M. Macé has never been excelled, if equalled.

## II

### ORROCK

**I**T was remarked at the time of this crime that it was very unusual for a police-constable to be murdered while on duty. Nearly fifty years have rolled by since then, and it is happily still a rare occurrence, although it was no fault of Charles Peace that Robinson was not added to the list. In more recent times we have had the Sidney Street affray, and, of course, the murder of Police-Constable Gutteridge.<sup>1</sup> The murder of the policeman, Cole, by Thomas Henry Orrock is vividly impressed upon my memory because it occurred at the end of my first term at Westminster and was much discussed among the boys, and there were also two other reasons, which I will give a little later.

On December 1, 1882, a police-constable named Cole went on night duty at Dalston. At ten o'clock he espied a man climbing over a wall by the Baptist Chapel in Ashwin Street. The man, upon being challenged, attempted to make off, whereupon Cole closed on him and pinned him to the ground. With a desperate effort the marauder managed to get one

<sup>1</sup> I must not omit the murder of gallant Police-Constable Byrnes by the Netherby Hall burglars three years later than that of Police-Constable Cole. (A. L.)



arm free and to draw a revolver. He fired at first three times, but he must have been as bad a shot as Sipido who (happily) missed King Edward at a yard range at Brussels Station, for although only about that distance off Cole his first two shots missed him completely, but a fourth, fired later, proved fatal. It was proved afterwards that the third shot had glanced off the dead constable's truncheon case. The struggle was seen by a girl. It was a foggy night, and against hurried movement, but she ran as fast as the conditions would permit, screaming for help, after the third shot was fired. She immediately came upon two other constables in Dalston Lane and they hastened back with her, but on their way a fourth shot rang out, and this time the unfortunate Cole was hit and killed instantaneously.

By the time the two policemen had reached their dead comrade, who lay prone on the pavement, the murderer had made off, screened by the fog.

At that time there happened to be at Scotland Yard one of the greatest detectives that ever was attached to headquarters, and that was Detective-Inspector Glasse. (Not Glass, as it is generally incorrectly written.)

The murderer had obviously been on burglarious intent, for by the dead constable were two chisels and a wooden wedge. Also were the truncheon-case with the bullet mark already alluded to, and that species of soft black hat that we associate with Methodist preachers, and what are known as chapel-folk. The usual term for this hat, I believe, is a wide-awake. There was no name in the hat, and, of course,

it was long before the introduction of the system of fingerprints.

There was only one clue. One of the chisels bore a scratch upon it. It was invisible to the naked eye, but Glasse, with his usual thoroughness, examined every article microscopically. As a result the word "rock" on the chisel became quite distinct. What was the meaning of "rock"? Was it the name of the owner? And here I will digress for a moment to explain one of my other two reasons why this particular crime is impressed upon my memory.

It was not so many years later that my old friend, Conan Doyle, was introducing his great creation, Sherlock Holmes, to a delighted nation. One of the earliest stories, and perhaps the best of a marvellous series, was *A Study in Scarlet*, the tale dealing with Mormonism. The reader will remember the triumphant manner in which Lestrade (or was it Gregson?) came to Sherlock Holmes and said that the writing in blood on the wall which spelt "Rache" were the first five letters of the woman's name, "Rachel." The reader will also remember the professional detective's discomfiture when Holmes informed him pityingly that there was no letter missing in "Rache" and that it was the German for "Revenge." In view of this digression will it occasion much surprise, will the reader have already guessed, that this incident was suggested to Doyle by the word "rock" scratched on the chisel discovered by the dead body of Police-Constable Cole?

For a whole year Glasse and his men submitted this chisel to shopkeepers, cabinet-makers, and their

employés in the Dalston neighbourhood. All to no purpose. Nobody recognised it. But one fine day the patience of the police was rewarded. A man named Preston, who was by trade a sharpener of knives, scissors, chisels, etc., died. His business was carried on by his widow. In due course the police paid her a visit, though by this time they must have felt it to be of a perfunctory nature. But in this world one never knows what is in store for us. Mrs. Preston informed the police that all chisels that passed through her hands were marked by her on the blade near the handle with a file, a nail, or sharp-pointed instrument.

Asked in what way she marked the tools, she answered, "With the owners' names." The police then showed her the word "rock." Did she know anybody of that name? Was that by any chance her mark? Yes, it was her mark, but "rock" stood for "Orrock." He was a young cabinet-maker who was a customer of hers, but she had not seen him for a long time.

The name "Orrock" is an uncommon one, and therefore the owner should prove easier to trace than the bearer of a better-known patronymic, and a thorough search resulted oddly enough in the discovery of Orrock in Coldbath Fields Prison.

Orrock was put up for identification, just as Hannah Dobbs had previously been submitted to that ordeal before the pawnbroker's assistant, and the result was that in his case the old Persian proverb, "The thief is safest under the castle wall," did not prove true, for it so happened that while they were patrolling

Dalston Lane on the night of December 1, 1882, two policemen noticed a man wearing a peculiar-shaped hat—a wideawake. This was about 9.30 p.m., that is to say about half an hour before the crime. One of these two officers failed to recognise Orrock at the identification parade, but the other was positive that it was the man that they had seen.

The police then, by further investigation, discovered that Orrock was acquainted with two men known to them, and that on the night of the murder all three had been together. One of these men—by name Evans—under pressure admitted that Orrock had told them that he was going to commit a burglary that evening, as he was desperately pushed, and out of work. He had been a chapel-goer, and knew the value of the plate used for Holy Communion at the Baptist Chapel in Ashwin Street. With his wideawake hat he looked the part, and no one would possibly take him for a burglar. Unfortunately for him (and as it proved for himself), Police-Constable Cole did.

Evans then declared that he and the other man (by name Miles) heard the four shots fired, and when the girl returned with the two constables they mingled with the crowd who, as is always the case under these circumstances, quickly assembled.

Whole volumes have been written upon the old saying, "Honour among thieves," and how far it is justifiable. It is questionable whether the police themselves secretly withhold their contempt for an informer—especially if the informer acts from motives of dross—and not out of revenge. The "approver,"

as the giver of King's evidence is technically called, never cuts a very heroic figure.

And in the Orrock case it is impossible to condemn wholly the silence of Evans and Miles in not coming forward and claiming the £200 reward offered for the apprehension of the murderer of Police-Constable Cole.

The trial of Orrock commenced on September 19, 1884, at the Old Bailey.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Justice Hawkins, afterwards Lord Brampton, presided. The accused was defended by Sir Forrest Fulton, afterwards Recorder of London. It is interesting to me, not only because I knew the Fulton family in private life,<sup>2</sup> but in those days Marshall Hall devilled for Sir Forrest, and the last-named begged Hall to turn his attention to the Criminal Bar, advice which we will all admit he followed to some purpose in after life.

The trial lasted two days and Orrock was found guilty and hanged. But during the proceedings the second of the two reasons why the trial so impressed itself upon me occurred. Poor Cole had only just been married when he was assassinated, in fact had barely celebrated his honeymoon, and much sympathy was expressed on all sides for his young widow who was devoted to him. In the Court a most painful scene occurred, for directly Mrs. Cole caught sight of

<sup>1</sup> Almost two years after the crime.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Forrest Fulton had a very beautiful daughter who was (not unnaturally) much spoilt. One day while playing bridge she remarked, "I am sorry to be so long, but I'm accustomed to playing with very good players."

To which Mrs. Robert Ponsonby answered sweetly :

"We have seen no trace of it up to the present, dear."

Orrock in the Court she gave way to a paroxysm of grief, crying out, "The brute! The brute!" Of course the judge had no option but to ask "the lady to endeavour to control herself," though probably in his inmost heart he could fully appreciate her state of mind. I do not think it can have been very pleasant for James Henry Orrock. In his place I think I should have wished the trial over as soon as possible, even if it entailed the assumption of the black cap.

There is always something especially nauseating in the committal of crime under the cloak of religion. In this case we have a regular chapel-goer who is not only caught in a most revolting act of sacrilege, but when caught does not hesitate to break the sixth commandment under particularly cowardly circumstances. Ugh.

### III

#### FOWLER AND MILSOM

**I**F Macé's detection of Voirbo was the greatest feat in French crime, or for that matter in all criminal history, that of Detective-Inspectors Marshall and Nutkins in conjunction with Police-Constable Burrell in tracing the Muswell Hill murderers is a very good second as pure sleuth-hound work, and in our opinion the greatest in this country.

Upon the evening of February 13, 1896, an appalling murder of an old man was committed in the North of London. As Dickens wrote of the murder of Nancy, "of all the dark deeds done in London that night that was the darkest." The old man in question was an eccentric recluse, named Henry Smith. He lived without any indoor servants and employed only a gardener. This man, by name Webber, left at dusk as was his wont, returning about six hours later to stoke the coke in the greenhouses. It transpired afterwards that a neighbour, named Stanbrook, noticed a suspicious-looking stranger outside his house, and as a result he examined both his own front gate and gate of Mr. Smith, but finding all secure he went into his own house, but noticed first of all that the stranger hurried away. Mr. Smith

lived in a fair-sized house standing in its own grounds, and even without servants it must have necessitated a certain outlay. Therefore, when an old man of seventy-nine years of age lives quite alone it is generally assumed by those who take a personal interest in his income that he keeps a part of it in the house in hard cash. Why this is so I cannot say. Unhappily for Mr. Smith the deduction in his case proved no fallacy. But Mr. Smith devoted a considerable amount of ingenuity to guard against robbery. It was part of Webber's duties to set spring-guns, and they were fashioned in this wise. The slightest interference with a thin wire attached to forks (not unlike a boy's catapult) would cause a weight to fall upon a cartridge fixed in the ground. The result was an explosion. Unfortunately, on the night of February 13 the device failed to function. Or rather it was given no opportunity of functioning, for on the following morning Webber noticed that all the wires had been removed from the forks and therefore no weights could fall upon any cartridges. Somebody must have known the ropes. (In this case the wires.)

Webber was accustomed to stoke the greenhouses about 11 p.m. and then return from his home at daylight to his work. On this particular morning (February 14) when Webber arrived at about 7 a.m., he naturally noticed the interference with the spring-guns. But previous to that he had had to use the duplicate key in his pocket to open the front gate. He found the gate was still locked. Only two people possessed keys, his master and himself. But Mr.



Smith kept very early hours. In winter he retired at 8 p.m. and rose at daylight, and his first action on rising was to open the front gate. Therefore it was unusual, practically unprecedented, for Webber to find the gate locked. It was not, however, until he noticed the interference with the spring-guns that he attributed the gate incident to sinister happenings, and not to indisposition. His next move was to knock at the front door. No answer. He then went round to the back of the house, and his apprehensions became certainties. The plants from the kitchen window had been moved, and the woodwork was chipped about. Glancing through the window itself, Webber saw something huddled up lying on the floor. Terrified, he tore off to Stanbrook's house, and the latter and another neighbour—Major Challen—with Webber entered the kitchen by a side door which they found wide open. Mr. Smith lay clad in his nightdress (pyjamas were only then coming into fashion), but he was so swathed and gagged with cloths (the kitchen tablecloth among others) that it was some time before the three men could unwrap them. Then a terrible spectacle met their gaze. The victim's head had been literally battered in, but there were also dreadful contusions and lacerations, and the whole place resembled a shambles, thereby attesting what a fine fight the old man had put up. Upstairs in the bedroom everything had been ransacked, the safe prised open, and even the mattress had been examined for hidden wealth.

The local police quickly discerned that two ineffectual attempts had been made to break in, one

through the drawing-room and one through the scullery, before an entrance had been effected through the kitchen.

The reconstruction of the crime was simple: the old man had been disturbed, descended into the kitchen, and then an appalling struggle had taken place. After the murder Mr. Smith had been trussed and gagged so as to avoid complications, and the burglars had rifled the house at their leisure. Then they had supped off bread and cheese. There had been two of them, as the footprints plainly visible to the fence clearly demonstrated. But there was just one little object that they left behind them that was to bring them both to the gallows, and afford scope for the greatest piece of detective work in the history of modern English crime. That little object was a small bull's-eye lantern.

Webber, the gardener, also picked up outside a small tobacco-box, and neither his master nor himself had ever been smokers. The grounds of Muswell Hill Lodge were bordered by an iron fence, on the other side a footpath led up to Coldfall Woods. On the centre bar of the fence was the mark of a muddy boot, and close to this on the footpath the tobacco-box was discovered.

In these cases of robbery with murder the first action of the police is to comb out the burgling fraternity and see which "lags" are accepting the hospitality of their Sovereign, and which are on ticket-of-leave. By a process of elimination, two men named respectively Henry Fowler and Albert Milsom were selected for special enquiry. Both

were old offenders and at the present time the police in North London had received a hint from headquarters that their movements might repay observation. And as a matter of fact Fowler was on ticket-of-leave at the present time. Moreover, he had failed to report himself, and on that account alone he could be arrested at any moment. But for the time being that would not have in any way assisted in the elucidation of the murder.

Then a very remarkable coincidence transpired. A certain Miss Good who, like Mr. Stanbrook and Major Challen, resided in the immediate neighbourhood of Muswell Hill Lodge declared that on February 12, two men had stopped her in the road and questioned her very minutely about Coldfall Woods. And it was on the same day that the local police (warned as I have stated) had seen Fowler and Milsom in each other's company. Among the enquiries made of Miss Good, by the strange men, was whether the backs of the houses in Muswell Hill gave on to the woods, their exact position as regards the houses, and at what time the last train left Muswell Hill Station.

Now comes the strange coincidence. Three days after the crime (February 17) Miss Kate Good (that was her full name, and she was quite a girl) had occasion to travel from Paddington. While seated in the train, waiting for it to start, she saw the very two men pass her carriage window on their way down the platform whom she had seen five days previously, near her home in Muswell Hill.

And yet another neighbour of Mr. Smith—Mrs.

Wheaton—said that on the morning of February 13 (the day of the murder) she met two men, one of them very powerfully built, and he was a man of frightening aspect, the more especially as it was in a lonely spot where she met him and his companion. Miss Good's description of the two strangers exactly tallied with that furnished by Mrs. Wheaton.

All efforts to trace the couple for the time being, however, proved abortive. So the detectives very cleverly concentrated on their belongings, or rather on those of Milsom. Mrs. Milsom lived in North Kensington, in Southam Street, and she and her husband had lived there for some time, but at present (odd as it may sound) the latter was not at home, and it was not known how long he would be away. The police, however, learnt many important details, among others that Fowler was a constant and, to Mrs. Milsom, an unwelcome visitor. On February 14 Milsom appeared in new clothes, and Fowler, who came with him, had on a brand-new overcoat.

It was at this juncture that a loafing sort of man was always hanging about Southam Street and seemed, like Uncle Dick in *David Copperfield*, particularly fond of watching children at play. One day he produced a small bull's-eye lantern and said, "What will you give me for this?" Whereat one of the youngsters, who was a younger brother of Mrs. Milsom, said, "Here, you give that to me, that's mine." Now this bull's-eye lantern had as a wick a piece of fustian and this fustian corresponded with a piece found in Milsom's house. Milsom's brother-in-law, young Henry Miller, said that he had missed the lantern

for some time. It had been taken from a drawer where he kept it and he never saw it again till the loafer showed it to him.

Then, among the property stolen from Mr. Smith was a £10 note. The number was known, and the cashing of it was traced backwards from the Bank of England to a publican.

The loafer shortly after suggested to young Miller that they might take a stroll together, and they wandered into the police station, where the boy was casually shown a tobacco-box, and he at once identified it as belonging to his brother-in-law, Albert Milsom.

It was now time to arrest the firm of Fowler and Milsom. But where were they? Marshall, Nutkins, and Burrell, who were deputed to hunt them down, all carried revolvers. They tracked the fugitives to Liverpool. There the scent failed. All they gathered was that the men were in funds. Then they followed them to Manchester, Cardiff, Newport, Bristol, and then north again to Southport. Thence to Birmingham. But there Fowler doubled back to Bristol, and Milsom returned to Southam Street, North Kensington. Picking up his wife and children, he joined Fowler at Bristol. (Mrs. Milsom was afterwards arrested as being an accessory after the fact, but was released.) From Bristol they repaired to Swindon, where Fowler obtained a job in a circus, doing the "strong man" turn. From Swindon they went to Chippenham and thence to Bath, Fowler being known as "Taylor" and Milsom as "Scott." In Bath they stayed in Monmouth Street (a wag at the time observed

that Milsom Street would have been more appropriate.)

Beau Nash never saw a more curious sight in the fashionable watering-place than that which occurred on the evening of Sunday, April 12, 1896. As soon as "Taylor" and "Scott" had returned to their lodgings after the closing of the public-houses, a strong force of local police surrounded the house and Nutkins, revolver in hand, burst into the sitting-room, followed by other officers. Milsom was at once secured, but Fowler dived towards the floor and groped under a sofa. Before he could grasp a revolver lying there Marshall and other officers were upon him, and a terrible struggle ensued. It was not until the butt-ends of the revolvers had been introduced to Fowler's head that he gave in. Then, semi-conscious and bleeding profusely, he was first handcuffed, and then his wounds were attended to.

Upon their arrest, as all the world knows, Milsom attempted to turn Queen's evidence and said that he had remained outside the house while Fowler committed the murder and the robbery. Altogether, Fowler helped himself to £112, of which he gave him (Milsom) £50, saying he was entitled to nothing as he was a cur for leaving a man in the lurch.

But shrewd Lord Brampton, who tried the case at the Old Bailey, evidently believed the logic contained in Fowler's statement, "I gave Milsom £53 and some odd shillings. If he had not assisted in the murder is it likely that I should have given him a bob? He kept his foot on 'poor old Mr. Smith's

neck until he was dead, and it was he who procured the keys of the safe from upstairs.' ”

It has always been a satisfactory feature of the case that Milsom suffered the same fate as his fellow-ruffian. And apparently Fowler thought the “ap-prover” an object of contempt. For when the jury had retired to consider their verdict (on the face of it a mere formula) a scene unprecedented in the British Courts of Justice was enacted.

Lord Brampton had a busy week at the end of May, 1896. Six days prior to this trial he had sentenced the infamous Mrs. Dyer—the Baby Farmer—to death, and he also had to pass the extreme sentence on Seaman, the Whitechapel murderer. But there were other reasons why he must have remembered the last week of May, 1896. Hardly had he left the bench while the jury had retired to consider their verdict upon Fowler and Milsom than the former made a tiger-like leap at the latter in the dock. He got him by the throat, but ere he could anticipate the hangman, one of the gaolers managed to hook his left arm. Half a dozen policemen then intervened and somehow or other Milsom was got down the stairs leading to the cells. Then commenced such an exhibition of virile force as would have delighted Ursus (in *Quo Vadis*) himself. Fowler, upon seeing the escape of his treacherous ex-partner, fought like a demon. Not only the dock, but the chairs in it were smashed to match-wood. Police reinforcements sprang from nowhere, and at length about a dozen ordinarily strong men succeeded between them in handcuffing Fowler.

One might write pages on this incident, but the lamentable fact remains that it is not only women, but men who secretly place physical strength above intellectuality. Despite centuries of civilisation, the cave-man wins. We are an appalling nation of hum-bugs, and it is my firm conviction that there is not a single man of us who, if he were asked what he would wish for more than anything in the world, would not reply "to be physically stronger than I am"—even the strongest of us. The old gladiatorial days have never died out. That is why Fowler is a sort of secret hero—ruffian though he was. That is why everyone in this country rejoiced when Milsom had to be executed with him.

But, all the same, Sir Max Pemberton pertinently asks, "Supposing on that fateful night of February 13, 1896, the two miscreants had been disturbed by a policeman upon his lonely beat, what would have happened to that policeman?" And yet, if civilisation is admittedly the thinnest veneer, can we not draw a moral lesson? Surely, if Fowler had confined himself to leading an honest life, i.e. exhibiting himself in a travelling show, as the strong turn, he would have made far more money than the fifty odd pounds he made by a murder that brought him to the scaffold?

To show how formidable the police regarded Fowler, even after sentence of death, when he and Milsom were hanged, Seaman, the Whitechapel murderer, was executed between them, and Seaman is reported to have remarked, "I have been many things in my time, but never before a—cop."



But all authorities agree that when Fowler learnt that Milsom was to die too he gave no further trouble.

It may be of interest to readers to learn that at Scotland Yard the relics in connection with this case are extraordinarily interesting. They comprise the tobacco-box, the famous bull's-eye lantern, a couple of chisels, but perhaps above all, to the curious, the apparatus devised by the plucky, unfortunate, and aged Mr. Smith for the frustration of the burglariously minded.

Permit me to close upon a romantic note. In April, 1896, I was on a visit to the Bride of the Adriatic. I was in a gondola on a side canal. Offenbach and Tosti were in my mind—dispelling the Borgias and Casanova. Suddenly I roused myself and opened an English newspaper. Now, my companion was a man I did not know very well. But in a weak moment I had consented to come with him from Paris to Venice. Neither of us had ever visited the latter before. I was younger then. I did not then know how very few of our acquaintances it is possible to travel with. Is not a famous form of reply to an enquiry as to the character of a man, "Well, I'd sooner you went round the world with him than I did"?

Well, upon this occasion I opened my newspaper and there I read out in tremendous excitement the news of Fowler's and Milsom's arrest in Bath. When I arrived at the incident of Fowler's ineffectual attempt to get hold of the revolver my companion exclaimed,

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"Oh! What a pity he could not get hold of it and so shoot some of the police down."

I made no comment at the time (or afterwards), and we never had any quarrel.

But I struck that gentleman off my visiting list.

#### IV

### THE MURDER OF INSPECTOR WALLS

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**E**ASTBOURNE has not only always been deservedly a most popular seaside resort, but whether as a residential town or viewed as a merely holiday centre it has always prided itself as being select. The tripper element is less noticeable in Eastbourne than in other seaside towns within easy reach of London. It is also famed for the excellence of its preparatory boys' schools, its girls' schools, its Cricket Weeks on the Saffrons (the baby of "Shrimp" Leveson-Gower) and the lawn tennis tournaments and concerts at Devonshire Park. Of a truth the Cavendish family may be said to possess something of considerable value in the town of Eastbourne. It is not perfect perhaps. What is? And one cannot please everybody. But both residents and visitors complain to me that there is a spirit of Puritanism in the place that still obtains, or at any rate did obtain until quite recently. Sunday amusements, the cinema, etc., are taboo even out of the hours of Divine Service.

And yet I can recall as a schoolboy a Sunday thrill that I have never forgotten though it was quite unrehearsed. In fact, in all my travels I have never seen a braver deed. It was about 12.15 p.m. on the

Sabbath. Quite a heavy sea was on and there was scarcely anyone upon the pier but the master. His office for the time being was a sinecure as there were no tolls to take. Suddenly a young woman clicked the entrance, deposited her twopence (or whatever was the due), walked straight down to the end of the pier and threw herself off. Her desperate action was seen and the piermaster notified. He raced down the pier, throwing off his coat and waistcoat on the way, then, only stopping to kick off his boots and throw off his trousers, he plunged into the foam. It was at once seen that he had got the woman, but it was also seen that with each succeeding wave he was being dashed against the iron piles.

It was the most wonderful example of a crowd collecting quickly that I have ever seen. A deserted esplanade soon became a seething mass. About the same time as the piermaster dived into the sea a boat was run out from shore, but it was nearer a quarter of an hour than ten minutes before the two people were got into the boat, and no one could say for the time being if the woman were alive or dead. I was one of the crowd who ran on to the sands to see the return, and I can recall the scene as though it were yesterday—even to noticing that in the piermaster's white shirt was a solitary gold stud. But the arresting spectacle was the gallant rescuer's legs. They were literally raw as the result of having been dashed against the piles, and with salt water on them the agony must have been atrocious.

The woman was unconscious and immediately rushed into the Burlington Hotel, where I am glad

to report the efforts at resuscitation were successful. What was the sequel I do not know, or what afterwards happened at the police court. But never in my life have I heard a man more loudly cheered than that piermaster, and the local clergyman when inside the Burlington held out his clerical hat with the words "For the piermaster who saved the lady's life." He very soon had to supplement that hat, for it filled immediately and I saw nothing in it lower than florins and half-crowns, and, of course, there was gold.

It subsequently transpired that the would-be suicide had had a quarrel with her mother. She had marched out of the house, gone straight on to the pier and thrown herself off at the end.

One would have thought that after such an experience the master would have taken an afternoon off. Not a bit of it. That same afternoon he was back at the toll-house, raw legs and all, and, of course, practically everybody who went on the pier that afternoon shook him by the hand and left something in it. But if anyone says that all this has nothing to do with murder (except self-murder) or detectives, I agree. But I offer no apology for the digression, for if I write about Eastbourne I cannot pass over the bravest deed I ever saw. Even now, nearly half a century later, when writing of it I feel as *émotionné* as the spectators did who beheld Ursus strangle the Aurochs in Sienkiewicz's masterpiece, *Quo Vadis*.

For it was a day of storm and a nasty sea was on when the gallant Eastbourne piermaster saved that woman from drowning upon that particular Sunday.

Many years afterwards a deed was enacted at Eastbourne as cowardly as the one I have just described was brave. For in 1912 a most brutal murder was perpetrated in the assassination of Inspector Walls of the local police, and it was mainly through the ability of Inspector Parker, of the same force, that the guilty man was brought to the gallows.

At this period there resided in South Cliff Avenue a Hungarian—a Countess Sztary. On the night of October 9 (a Wednesday) the Countess and another lady drove off to dine at a hotel—I think our old friend, the Burlington. As they drove off the coachman noticed a man crouching on the portico over the doorway. He did not draw his mistress's attention to this at first, but after they had proceeded about a quarter of a mile he pulled up and imparted the information. Whereat the Countess directed him to turn round and go back to the house. Immediately upon her return the Countess telephoned the news to the police station.

Accordingly, acting upon orders, Inspector Walls hurried to the Countess's house and lo and behold! there was the intruder all right, still on the portico, and within a few yards of the Inspector underneath. What happened then was clearly heard by the Countess, her friend, and the coachman. The Inspector called on the burglar to come down immediately. By way of reply the man on the portico drew a revolver, rested it upon the ledge so as to obtain surer aim, and then deliberately fired. Walls was a man of fine physique and therefore a good mark. The assassin fired twice. At the first shot Walls staggered towards

the road, and almost immediately upon the second shot he collapsed there.

The discharge of these two shots caused the horse to attempt to bolt (it was a one-horse brougham), and the coachman had all his work cut out to save the carriage. But a maidservant from opposite, and a pedestrian, who had witnessed the tragedy, hastened to the stricken man, but he was beyond human aid.

It is not a little singular that, although the number of murdered policemen in this country is exiguous, as I have remarked elsewhere, the particular nature of these five sketches should embrace three of their number, to wit, Cole, Walls, and Gutteridge. Moreover, as in the case of Orrock, the murderer left a hat behind him, but not of the nature of a wideawake, but what is known as a "trilby."

The first clue that put the police on the right track was a letter. This message was sent to a man named Williams, from his brother, at 4 Tideswell Road, Eastbourne, urging him to come to Eastbourne at once and bring money with him. Now a young doctor, named Power, was acquainted with both the brothers Williams, and having read of the murder and the recipient of the card having mentioned the gist of the contents, Power put two and two together and himself repaired to Eastbourne, where he interviewed the Chief Constable. It appears that in the letter the one Williams had written to the other, it was a question of "saving his life." Power also informed the Chief Constable that he had ascertained that the brother who had travelled to Eastbourne with the money, in response to the appeal, was

returning that night with a woman, named Florence Seymour, who was a friend of the sender of the appeal. Accordingly the brother and the woman were shadowed to London, but on arrival there the detectives lost them. It so happened that there was a fog on. The couple having no luggage with them sprang from the train before it had stopped, and had then jumped into the only vacant cab on the rank. But before these happenings the police had ascertained that on the afternoon of October 9, two people had been noticed loitering in South Cliff Avenue—the woman appeared to be stationed at the end of the avenue, while her companion seemed particularly curious as to the architecture of the houses. If residence outside very large towns has its disadvantages, it has also its advantages, as in this instance. If one cannot walk down a street without everybody remarking upon it, so here many inquisitive eyes noticed this man and this woman. And it having been ascertained that the man's name was Williams, and his friend's was Florence Seymour, and that Williams's brother had received this urgent request for his society and for money, the scent was now growing warm. This may perhaps sound more simple than it really was. It was very smart work even with Power's assistance to establish the identity of the two loiterers in South Cliff Avenue, and to connect the man with the dispatch of the letter—all within twenty-four hours.

But Williams's brother was not Williams, and it was the murderer that the police wanted. And here again Power's services were enlisted. It was a moral



certainty that the murderer would join his brother. Power knew the brothers' habits and their haunts. Moreover, he was acquainted with Florence Seymour. At length the patience of the police was rewarded and the wanted man was arrested in a City restaurant. On the day after his arrest Williams was taken back to Eastbourne. Meanwhile it had been ascertained that he was an old-timer. But with scrupulous fairness Williams's features were covered during the journey and this gave rise to the well-known expression in connection with this case, namely, "the Hooded Man." The police in New York might well take a lesson in how to play the game from our men in this case, as being hooded there could be no possible risk of mistaken identification.

Meanwhile the detectives had succeeded in tracing and arresting Florence Seymour.

In a sense Williams may be said to have been the precursor of the Cat Burglar. He had been a sailor, and, of course, he could not get on the portico without climbing there. As a matter of fact, the rope which he used to ascend the portico was afterwards discovered on the seashore. At one end was a large iron hook which would afford him the necessary purchase. Further enquiries elicited the fact that when he was in the Navy he had been well known for his agility. But the most damning piece of evidence against Williams was the discovery of the revolver with which the deed was committed. The hiding-place was revealed by Florence Seymour. It was proved to have been the property of Williams. This weapon Williams broke in two and then buried in the beach.

It has always been a matter of wonder how any man, murderer or otherwise, could have been such a bungler. Why give oneself all the trouble of breaking it and burying it? Why not consign it "into the deep bosom of the ocean"?

Further detective work revealed that Williams and Florence Seymour had pretended to be married. That they had deposited luggage at Victoria. When the latter was examined there were found pawnbroker's tickets for jewels which had been stolen from various houses, burglar's tools, a revolver case, and a false moustache.

Williams was tried at Lewes Assizes on the following December 12. The trial lasted three days and Williams elected to give evidence upon his own behalf. He was three hours under cross-examination.

The trial is remarkable because the jury were only absent a few minutes before Mr. Justice Channell passed sentence of death. The usual appeal followed, with the usual result, the judges being Lord Alverstone and Justices Phillimore and Ridley. But even then there was an attempt to save Williams from the scaffold—an unusual attempt. The Home Secretary was actually requested in Parliament to delay the execution in order that Williams might formally marry Florence Seymour, who either was about to give birth to a child, or else had already done so. The Home Secretary, needless to say, declined to interfere in the matter. If the child were already born, it could do no good as in those days the Legitimacy Act had not been passed, and the marriage would not benefit the innocent offspring. If the

child were not already born, it would have been the thin end of the wedge, because some people would have said, "Poor fellow, they can't hang a man who has just been officially allowed to marry." In any case the child had to suffer, just as only the other day the wretched innocent children of the unspeakable Rouse were left to the tender mercies of a country so well described by Sir Max Pemberton as the cruellest of all to the unfortunate.

Like Browne and Kennedy, the record of Williams was a very bad one, and he had been a criminal from as early in life as the Artful Dodger.



BROWNE



KENNEDY



BROWNE AND KENNEDY

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I HAVE mentioned in the Foreword that I find it impossible to believe that anyone who is *really* cognisant of the facts of this revolting double murder can still be in favour of the abolition of capital punishment. And by the expression "of the facts" I am going to boil them down a little later on to Kennedy's signed statement (or confession), dated January 26, 1928. Nay, I am only going to quote one extract from it. But all in its proper place.

It is always of interest to have known personally anyone connected with the elucidation of a mystery—in this case the unravelling of a ghastly crime—and there were two people in the Browne and Kennedy Case whom I have the pleasure of knowing. Close to where the brave and unhappy Police-Constable Gutteridge met his cruel fate there resides a lady of my acquaintance, Gertrude Lady Decies, and at the time of the discovery of the body she gave the police certain information. My other acquaintance is Sir Wyndham Childs, and I need not dwell on the assistance rendered by him through his expert knowledge of firearms. Inspector James Berrett would be the first to endorse this.

It was on September 27, 1927 (a Monday), that Police-Constable Gutteridge of the Essex Constabulary between 3 and 4 a.m. set forth to meet a fellow-policeman, named Taylor, at a fixed point on the road between Romford and Ongar. The exact rendezvous was on Howe Green. After the interview the two men parted in order to return to their respective homes. They lived in opposite directions. Police-Constable Gutteridge resided at Stapleford Abbots and Taylor just off the Chigwell Road. Howe Green is about a mile and a half distant from the two houses. Some three hours later, a few hundred yards from where the two policemen had met, the dead body of Gutteridge was found lying against a bank on the wayside. Assistance was at once procured, and despite the early hour and the unfrequented neighbourhood a small crowd quickly gathered, and the police were soon on the spot. The latter at once noticed a remarkable fact. An open notebook lay by the dead policeman and he was gripping a pencil. The remarkable detective work in this case commenced from the very first. The police at once jumped to the conclusion (and rightly, as we shall shortly see) that when their comrade was shot he was making a note in his book by the light of a motor-lamp. Why? Because his electric torch was in his pocket, and there was no lamp-post in the vicinity. (At 6 a.m. at the end of September it would be still dark under the new daylight-saving scheme.) The constable had been murdered under unspeakable circumstances, twice he had been shot in the face, but (*horresco referens*) the fiend who had killed him had



MAJOR GENERAL SIR BORLASE EDWARD WYNHAM CHILDS,  
K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B.





actually shot out both his eyes, i.e. four shots had been fired in all.

The loneliness of the neighbourhood made enquiries *re* passing motor-cars less difficult than they would have been in a crowded part, but in addition to that a doctor, named Lovell, notified the police that his car had been stolen during the night from where he practised at Billericay. The identification details were supplied, and the car was recovered abandoned in Brixton. But not as it was in the doctor's garage. For the running-board was blood-bespattered, and inside the car was a spent cartridge-case. This empty cartridge-case was to play an important part in the Browne and Kennedy Case.

Sir Wyndham Childs, after a distinguished Army record, was at that time Assistant Commissioner of Police. Among his many qualifications was a wonderful knowledge of firearms, and he at once noticed that the spent cartridge-case was of a make that had been in use in the Army up to 1914, but in that epoch-making year it had been improved upon by another type of cartridge. Nor was that all. The close examination of the wounds on the dead constable had revealed that a bullet had been projected by the aid of black powder. Now black powder was obsolete as far as revolver bullets were concerned. Nay, more, it had been out of use for twenty years. And this was the clue that led to the arrest of the murderers.

For months the police tested every revolver that came into their possession and apparently all to no purpose, until on January 20, after exercising

wonderful patience,' Detective-Inspector Berrett decided that he had collected sufficient evidence to arrest a garage-keeper in Clapham, named Frederick Guy Browne.

A thorough search of Browne's premises convinced Berrett that he had found his quarry. Arrested in the first instance for stealing a motor-car in the previous November, Browne very soon found himself accused of a far more serious charge. The examination of the premises, as I have said, was attended with most satisfactory results. As a consequence, on the day after Browne's arrest Berrett enquired of Browne an account of his movements on the night of September 27 of last year (1927) and added that he would be glad to know where he procured the revolver (a Webley) and the ammunition that he had found in his garage, and how cartridges encased in the corresponding manner to the one found by Police-Constable Gutteridge's body had come into his possession. After he had been cautioned in the usual way, Browne made a long statement, which he signed, proclaiming his utter disconnection with the crime, concluding with the words, "I have had no connection with the murder of Police-Constable Gutteridge, and personally I am not interested in it, because it does not interest me."

Exactly eight days after the arrest of Browne (January 28) a man named Kennedy was arrested in Liverpool charged as being an accomplice of Browne in the theft of the car in the previous November. He appears to have indulged in aliases as regards his Christian names, because he is called at one time

Patrick Michael William, and 'at others William Henry.

When confronted with Berrett at Scotland Yard, Kennedy asked to see his wife, and permission being granted he told her that they had got something against him far more serious than motor-car stealing, and then he referred to the murder, saying in reply to a question by his wife that he did not do it, but he knew who did. After informing his wife that if he were hanged she would be a widow, but that if he were only an accessory after the fact he would get "a long stretch of penal servitude," he asked her which she would prefer. In the latter event, would she wait for him all these years? On her assenting he made *his* signed declaration, to which I shall again refer a little later. But meanwhile let us examine the history of these two beauties.

Browne at the time of the murder was forty-six years of age. There are always people willing to deify an assassin, even in this case. Let us see how far this is justified, putting out of our minds (if it is possible) the account of the crime given in Kennedy's statements. In 1909 Browne was convicted of bicycle stealing (not upon an isolated occasion, but as a hobby) and was sentenced to twelve months' hard labour. When Browne was tried for the murder of Police-Constable Gutteridge he declared that he had never fired a revolver in his life. Yet it was shown that even in his bicycle-stealing days he always carried a weapon of that description loaded, and his operations generally necessitated his being out at night. In fact in 1910 he was convicted and sentenced for carrying firearms

in Berkshire. In the following year he was sentenced by the Oxford Bench to six months' hard labour for larceny. Upon serving that sentence he received twelve months' hard labour for house-breaking; in the year following upon his release he was charged with being a receiver (a bicycle, knowing it to be stolen) and this time he was given another year's hard labour.

In 1916 he joined the Royal Engineers, but soldiered in England. He was discharged from the Army in 1918 just before the close of hostilities, having been convicted by the Civil power (Petersfield Bench, the sentence was ten months). In 1923 he reverted to his 1909 practices but with this difference, in *lieu* of bicycles, he stole motor-cars. For this offence and for forgery he was sentenced early in the following year to four years' penal servitude.

His conduct in prison was violent and mutinous. It was after he had been transferred from Parkhurst to Dartmoor that he first met Kennedy.

Upon his release in 1927 Browne embarked upon a regular course of burglary, culminating in the theft of Dr. Lovell's car, and the murder of Police-Constable Gutteridge.

Kennedy's brief biography is as follows,

William Henry Kennedy was a bad Irishman. He missed his avocation. He should have been a Chicago gunman. Yet, criminal as he was, he does not inspire in us the aversion that Browne does.

He joined the Army in 1903 at the age of twenty-one. After serving eight years he settled in Liverpool. In Cottonopolis he seems to have worshipped at the

shrines of Dionysus and Aphrodite. So much so that in connection with the latter he was sent to prison for two months with hard labour, under circumstances which are unprintable. Then followed four months for stealing. Transferring his assiduities to North Wales, he spent four months in the gallant little Principality as the guest of the Prince's father for robbery, passing the time by doing hard, if unskilled, labour. Then followed various convictions varying from petty fines to six years' penal servitude. We may remark, however, *en passant* that in Lancashire he again fell under the spell of the Goddess of Love and the recurrence of the incident cost him a month's hard labour.

In 1916, being again a free man, he rejoined the Army, but after serving four months he deserted, the exact date being August 17. He then re-enlisted a week later in another regiment under a false name.

It is then that his suitability for partnership with Browne becomes psychic, for before the two men met, Kennedy too was dismissed the Army upon conviction by the Civil power, and, still more remarkable, the offence was stealing a bicycle. His ticket-of-leave being forfeited, he was sent back to Portland to complete the six years' penal servitude. Liberated on August 11, 1917, he rejoined the Army, from which he again deserted three weeks later. From 1920-1924 he was convicted six times, the last offence entailing three years' penal servitude. It was while he was serving this sentence that Kennedy met Browne at Dartmoor, the latter then doing four

years for theft and forgery, as I have previously stated.

Upon their release our two heroes joined forces at a motor-garage at Clapham, but in December, 1927, Kennedy returned to Liverpool. He returned to Browne again on January 13 of the next year, but doubled back to Liverpool a week later upon hearing of Browne's arrest for the murder of Police-Constable Gutteridge. Kennedy himself was arrested in Liverpool on January 25, and brought back to London, and on the following day made *his* signed statement to Detective-Inspector Berrett. Now I am not going to give the whole of this statement, I am merely going to quote from it. Can there be anything more awful than this passage?

"I well remember the day of September 26. Browne suggested that I should accompany him to Billericay, to assist him in stealing a Raleigh car at the end of the High Street, away from the Station. We went to a place which faces a large, empty house standing in its own grounds. Browne entered the grounds of the house where the Raleigh car was supposed to be. We went to Billericay by rail from Liverpool Street, which I think was shortly after 7 p.m., because we left the garage at 6.30 p.m.

"I accompanied Browne into the grounds. Browne opened the door of the garage, I think with a key, and examined the Raleigh car, and we then left the garage and grounds, and hid in the grounds of the empty house and waited until the people owning the Raleigh car went to bed.

"Browne told me to wait in the grounds of the empty

house, and Browne went to the garage where the car was stored. A dog came out, and, starting to bark, it made Browne leave and join me, and he said, 'It's no good here. We can't get back by train, so we'll try somewhere else.' The time was then, I should think, about 11 p.m. We walked through the village again and came to a spot, which I now know is the doctor's house, on a sharp bend at the opposite end to where the Raleigh car was, and on the main London road.

"We saw the garage at the end of the doctor's house, and we went into the field opposite, and sat on some old palings or gates, and waited till the lights went out in the doctor's house. It was getting late, and must have been after midnight.

"After the lights went out Browne and I went to the garage, which is a wood structure, and he forced the doors with, I think, a small tyre lever or tool of some kind, which he took with him.

"The door was opened easily.

"He first examined the petrol tank and make of car, and told me there was plenty of petrol in the tank. He told me it was a Morris-Cowley. It ran down on its own weight to the road, and we pushed it along about a hundred yards in the opposite direction, or at right angles to the main road. Browne said, 'We will go by the by-ways and escape the main road.' We then went for a long run round country lanes at great pace at different times. We got to several crossroads and corners, where it was necessary for us to examine the signposts, but eventually we got on to a kind of main road on the way to Ongar. When we



got some distance up on this road we saw some one who stood on the bank and flashed his lamp as a signal to stop. We drove on, and I then heard a police-whistle, and told Browne to stop. He did so quite willingly, and when the person came up we saw it was a policeman. Browne was driving, and I was sitting on his left in the front. The policeman came up close to the car and stood near Browne and asked him where he was going and where he came from. Browne told him we came from Lea Bridge Road garage, and had been out to do some repairs. The policeman then asked him if he had a card. Browne said, 'No.' He then asked Browne, 'Have you a driving licence?' Browne again said, 'No.' The policeman then again asked him where he came from, and Browne stammered in his answer, and the policeman then said, 'Is the car yours?' I then said, 'No; the car is mine.' The policeman flashed his light in both our faces, and was at this time standing close to the running-board on the off side. He then asked me if I knew the number of the car, and Browne said, 'You'll see it on the front of car.' The policeman said, 'I know the number, but do you?' I said, 'Yes, I can give you the number,' and said 'T.W. 6120.' He said, 'Very well, I'll take particulars,' put his torch back in his pocket, and pulled out his notebook, and was in the act of writing when I heard a report, quickly followed by another one. I saw the policeman stagger back and fall over by the bank at the hedge. I said to Browne, 'What have you done?' and then saw he had a large Webley revolver in his hand. He said, 'Get out quick.' I immediately got

out and went round to the policeman, who was lying on his back, and Browne came over and said, 'I'll finish the —,' and I said, 'For God's sake don't shoot any more, the man's dying,' as he was groaning.

"The policeman's eyes were open, and Browne, addressing him, said, 'What are you looking at me like that for?' and, stooping down, shot him at close range through both eyes. There were only four shots fired. Browne then said, 'Let's get back into the car.' We had driven close into the bank, and backed out a little, and drove on in the direction of Ongar. He gave me the revolver, and told me to load it while he drove on. I loaded it, and in my excitement I dropped an empty shell in the car. The other three I threw away into the roads. We drove at great pace through many villages, the names of which I do not know, but I know we went through Buckhurst Hill, and then Bow and the Elephant and Castle, and while on this journey Browne said, 'Have you loaded that gun again? If you have, give it me back.' I gave it to him, and he kept it on the seat by his right-hand side. He wanted to take the car to the garage, but I persuaded him to have nothing to do with the garage. We drove to Brixton, and went up a road I don't know the name of, and drove into a cul-de-sac at about 5.30 a.m. We left the car and came out into the main road, and came by tramcar back to the garage, bringing with us two cases out of the car containing doctor's instruments. These, or the majority of them, were smashed up, and the cases were cut up into small pieces, which Browne later took out in his car and distributed about various roads in the

country, so as to destroy all evidence, and I did not know that he retained any of the doctor's property. I forgot to mention that on our journey, after shooting the policeman, Browne turned into a tree, owing to fog, at a gate. The fog was very dense at that time. I think he damaged the near side front wing. I was very excited at the time. We returned to the garage about 6 a.m. and commenced our work."

I have remarked on the horror of this passage and also in the Foreword I mentioned that I found it not only difficult, but impossible to understand how anybody after reading it can say that such a man as Browne should not suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

But if there are such people, what would they say if they had seen what I have seen? And that is the effect of the shooting out of Gutteridge's eyes. It was an ineffaceable horror. I have had nightmares over it. No words of mine can bring home to the reader how I was affected. And underlying all the terror of it was an overwhelming sense of fury. Here was a young man (and a very good-looking one too) not only murdered, but done to death with the cruelty and ferocity of a Red Indian. That is why I cannot even discuss the abolition of the death penalty.

Miscreant though he was, Kennedy (who, by the way, although an Irishman was born in Ayrshire) does seem to have been possessed of some latent feeling of humanity, for his statement reads true. I have no doubt that he did attempt to dissuade Browne from his unspeakable atrocity. There is too a marked difference in the physiognomies if the reader will

examine them. Browne's is one of the most repellent I have ever seen. We none of us would care to meet him in a lonely forest.

But there is in Kennedy's features a vague something not wholly unsuggestive of that sense of humour that all Irishmen are said to possess. But all the same he was a murderer. He told Berrett that he would receive a long term of penal servitude for being an accessory after the fact of Gutteridge's murder. He was hanged for it. But quite apart from that, by his own admission he shot two "black-and-tans in Ireland during the Revolution." So he too met a fate that was fully deserved. But I do not believe that having shot the black-and-tans he would afterwards—given the opportunity—have shot out their eyes.<sup>1</sup>

The trial of Browne and Kennedy commenced at the Old Bailey, under the presidency of Mr. Justice Avory, on April 23, 1928. (In some quarters an attempt was made to prejudice the case in the accused men's favour by dwelling upon the fact that they had been incarcerated for three months.) For the prosecution Sir Boyd Merriman (the Solicitor-General), Mr. H. D. Roome, and Mr. G. B. McClure. For Browne, Messrs. E. F. Lever and W. B. Frampton. For Kennedy, Messrs. F. J. Powell and C. Abbott. The trial lasted five days. Both the prisoners' counsel—all four of them—fought desperately for their clients' lives. But it was Kennedy's signed statement

<sup>1</sup> It is a very old superstition with criminals that the pupil reflects the image of the assassin, i.e. that Browne's likeness would be reflected in the dead man's eyes. Needless to say it is only superstition, as Sir George Turner, or any surgeon, will bear out. (A. I.)

that hanged both of them. We may well understand that it hanged Browne. But, someone will say (or as our old friend Cicero would express it, "*quam-obrem*"), how did the statement destroy Kennedy? The answer is that Kennedy admitted that when Browne handed him the revolver after the murder, at Browne's request he reloaded it. Moreover, and again at Browne's request, he gave the revolver back to him—loaded. In his admirable and logical summing up Mr. Justice Avory, owing to this incident, disposed of the suggestion that Kennedy was no party to the shooting and not only that, but objected to it. Moreover the judge added that had Kennedy gone into the witness-box he must have been asked for what purpose he had reloaded the revolver. And it was because he could not give a satisfactory answer that he did not go into the witness-box. A further reason too was that the whole of his previous criminal record would have been exposed. But as a matter of history Kennedy *was* permitted to make a statement from the dock. This of course did not entail cross-examination or the calling of evidence.

The jury were absent three and a quarter hours. We may speculate that most of this time was devoted to the verdict as regards Kennedy. Was he privy to the murder? Of Browne's guilt there could be no doubt, although before he was sentenced to death he declared his innocence.

While he was awaiting the end in Wandsworth Prison, Kennedy is said to have become converted to Roman Catholicism. This may astonish other people besides myself, because the name Kennedy (and an

Irishman) would suggest that he was born in that faith.

The reader may ask, what about the clever detective work in the Browne and Kennedy Case? To describe in detail the patient labour with which Berrett and his subordinates experimented for four whole months with every revolver that came into their possession, in quest of that black powder, would be a very long and probably a dry story. But no praise can be too high for these officers, as they persevered and won through after many discouragements and more than discouragements. For in certain quarters Berrett and his men were accused of extracting Kennedy's signed statements by Third Degree methods. From the Bench Mr. Justice Ivory gave the lie to these accusations. And furthermore he delivered the warmest of eulogies to Inspector Berrett and the officers of the Essex Constabulary. And rightly so. For thanks to them the slaying of Police-Constable Gutteridge was avenged. Browne and Kennedy were hanged on Thursday, May 31, 1928. And so June-tide made its entry on a world unpolluted by their contaminating presence.





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